CASTE SYSTEM IN ANCIENT SOUTH INDIA

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the thesis entitled ***"CASTE SYSTEM IN ANCIENT SOUTH INDIA"*** *submitted by* ***Jagadevappa Tulajappa*** *is an original work of research carried out by him under my supervision in History. The thesis or a part thereof has not been submitted hitherto to any other University or Institution for the award of any degree or diploma. I recommend the thesis for submission for the award of the degree of* ***DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY*** *in* ***HISTORY,*** *from Gulbarga University, Gulbarga.*

Place :

Date :

Dr. Arunkumar R. Naronakar
Research Guide

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis entitled ***"CASTE SYSTEM IN ANCIENT SOUTH INDIA"*** *in History is an independent work based on research undertaken by me under the supervision of* ***Dr. Arunkumar R. Naronakar, Principal, Government First Grade College, Madanhipparga*** *and has not been submitted either in part or in full to any other University or Institution for the award of any research degree.*

Place :

Date: ***Jagadevappa Tulajappa***

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Located in Southern Asia, India is known for more than its traditional fashions we perceive today. There is more to its mere modern society. India is an ancient country with a very captivating background. From social, religious, to historical aspects, ancient India has been created on a foundation that stands strong in its beliefs. There were countless steps taken in order to instill a value in its large society. History and religion play the most important role in doing so. Having a powerful structure will insure any society of their chance at gaining an advantage in understanding the value of the society's beliefs. This has allowed the caste system to stamp its position in India's ancient history. The caste system is a division of society based on differences of wealth, inherited rank or privilege, profession, occupation, or race.[1] The creation myth is also an important aspect in creating ancient India's norms. The caste system of 200 C.E. and creation myth of 500 B.C.E goes hand in hand. As we uncover the numerous explanations of why society is in its present condition, we will gain a detailed understanding of its many influences. While referring to the Rig Veda and Aryan influence, it is evident that the Hindu creation myth has helped established society's caste system.

The influence of Aryans around 1500 B.C.E. in the Indian society influenced the Indian caste system drastically. The Aryans had a system of cosmic and social order.[2] When the Aryans arrived in India they disregarded the local cultures.[3] They began conquering and taking control over regions in north India and at the same time pushed the local people Southwards or towards the jungles and mountains in north India.[4] This prompted the society to create a system of class. As the influence of a class system hardened in Ancient India, the idea of Varna's had become so deeply embedded in the Indian mind that its terminology was even used, for the classification of precious commodities.[5]

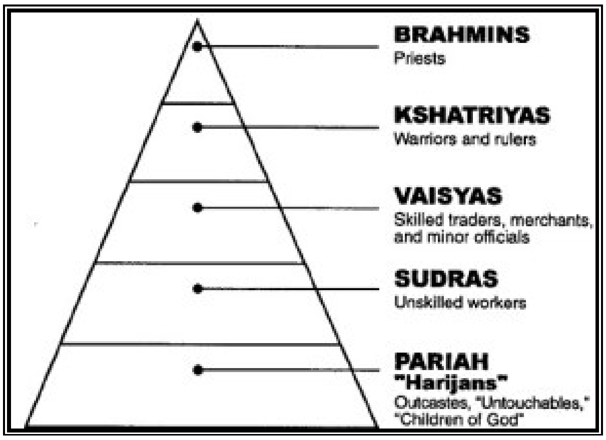
In correspondence with the Hindu creation myth, Vedas are the basis of understanding the Hindu society. A Veda is any of four canonical collections of hymns, prayers, and liturgical formulas that comprise the earliest Hindu sacred writings.[6] "Around 500 B.C. Indians began to record their extensive oral religious traditions in what became known as Vedic literature."[7] The Rig Veda, one of the oldest serves as significance because the Hindu creation myth and caste system can be found in it. Chapter five of the Rig Veda introduces the Varna.

There were four main class levels or Varna's in the caste system, Brahmanas, Kshatrias, Vaishias, and Sudras. According to the religious aspect of the ancient creation myth, each level of class was created from

each body part of Purush. In reference to the ancient Hindu book, Purush was the primal man.[8] The body parts of Purush play a significant part in establishing boundaries of the caste system. It is understood that Purush destroyed himself in order to create human society.[9] Each part of the body determined a level class based on its order from the top to the bottom. The Brahmanas which were created from Purush's head were acknowledged as the highest level of the caste system. Following Brahmanas were the Kshatrias created from his hands, Vaishias (thighs), and its lowest class, Sudras (feet). As things progressed including the Aryan invasion, ancient India's system of class became more sophisticated. This is evident in the creation myth of Rig Veda. Lines eleven and twelve of the Rig Veda simply stated, "When they divided Purusha how many portions did they make? What do they call his mouth, his arms? What do they call his thighs and feet? The Brahmana was his mouth, of both his arms was the Rajanya made. His thighs became the Vaishia, from his feet the Sudra was produced."[10]

The Aryan's distinguished different classes and brought attention to a system known as the caste system. Understanding where you came from and why was now more important than any time before. This prompted the difference in gender and the role it played on levels of class as well. Men were more dominate in the caste system. Women were born into their varna and it could not be changed. "Relations between classes and social groups in later Hinduism were governed by rules of endogamy (marriage was only legitimate

within the group).”[11] If a man wanted to marry outside his class he had the option to marry and descend to a lower class but there was no moving of the woman to a higher one. “The natural reproductive role of child-bearing and nursing was at one time thought to be the factor that constrained the “economic” activities of women, being translated, for instance, into restriction to such activities as gathering, rather than hunting.”[12] The Hindu creation myth did provide a basis for a caste system, with this in mind, the conclusion drawn was that, the caste system was not a fair system nor was it moral. The caste system could have easily been thrown out to make ancient India a more prosperous and justified society. Yet, with the impact that the creation myth played on society it was not.



The Hierarchy of Indian Caste System

The Hindu creation myth and Aryans worked hand in hand. The Aryans powerful influence impacted the ancient Indian society’s caste system. As stated earlier, with the help of Aryan influence the Hindu creation myth

influenced the creation of the caste system. According to this system of class, being a priest, warrior, trader, or laborer determined your status in ancient India. The Brahmanas, Kshatriyas, Vaishias, and Sudras were more than a mere comparison with Purush's body parts. Each level also served as a social standing. Brahmanas were considered the priest, Kshatriyas were warriors, Vaishias (traders), and Sudras serves as laborers. Without the creation myth there would be no beginning to the caste system. The Hindu creation myth serves as the caste systems fundamentals to enriching the society. It has allowed the ancient Indian society to stand in firm belief of its system. Every culture has influenced one another with great impact. The ancient Indian civilization has allowed people to compare and contrast many events that take place in society today. While comparing the significance of things today it also allows one to reflect back to religious aspects of other beliefs. This helps determine how many creation stories are similar.

The legacy of the Ancient Indian civilization is marked in a way by the Hindu Creation Myth. The Hindu Creation myth established society and government in ancient India in a remarkable way. It is apparent that the myth has had the most influence based on many different laws and rules of the civilization. In referencing to the creation myth, as Purush developed a system of social class from the parts of his body, while the Aryan invasion is what prompted the major change is establishing the social system of class. When thinking about the effects of many different influences in ancient societies the

question is often proposed, how does or has this effected today's society? Everything taken place in the past has led up to the norms of today's society. From ancient civilizations to modern cultural aspects everything has derived from the beginning. The attributes of ancient India can be related to the modern American society today. The American class system, upper, middle and lower class is in close comparison with ancient India's caste system.

Although there are many aspects that differ, the concept is much of the same. Understanding the past of ancient India is a contribution itself. Being knowledgeable about ancient India allows one to put several religious and cultural influences in somewhat of a timeline to better understand why society has led up to where it is today. This again goes back to the point made earlier, from ancient civilizations to modern cultural aspects; everything has derived from the beginning. The explanation of the Hindu Creation myth and its influence on Ancient India's caste system has been proven remarkable.

The purpose of this Research is to analyse the development of caste in South India in the period from about 1st century B.C. to about 12th century C.E. This will be done by using sources that, while critically important, have been ignored by anthropologists because they have been unavailable. Tracing the history of caste involves creating a definition of it. Obviously, if one says that caste is simply *varïa*, then early South Indian sources will be of little use. If, on the other hand, one looks at other features of caste that seem

to be more important to how it actually functions-the nature of untouchability, for example-then the early Tamil sources have much to reveal.[13]

The earliest Tamil texts show the existence of what seems definitely to be caste, but which antedates the Brahmins and the Hindu orthodoxy that are usually thought to be necessary for its existence. Rather, caste is seen to depend on a belief system that has peculiar notions about sacred power. The continuance and welfare of society are caused by the presence of power in its auspicious form, power that must be generated by all those who are truly members of the society-especially the king and high-born women. The maintenance of this auspicious and ordered power presupposes the control of its analogue, dangerous natural power that must feed the king, but that must be controlled in its many everyday manifestations. This power cannot be handled by those who are actually in the society, but must be controlled by classes that are low and, in a sense at least, outside of the boundaries of society. These classes, of which there are many, are the untouchables. They are characterized by their ability to manipulate dangerous power whether in dirty clothes or in a drum or elsewhere-and by being possessed by dangerous spirits, especially during performance. Because they could act as receptacles and controllers of dangerous power, these low castes were important to the king, since he acted as a sort of engine, transmuting the dangerous power they supplied him into its auspicious analogue. It is difficult to generalize about the numbers and nature of upper castes in ancient Tamilnad. The

poems that describe marriage with a relative and arranged marriage, and the many names given to people of different occupations, suggest that society had many endogamous groups.On the other hand, the hierarchy of the groups seems less pronounced than it became later.[14]

South India as considered here is a complex, composite region consisting of diverse physical, social, and cultural components. Definition of its distinguishing characteristics constitutes a crucial and, often, difficult problem. To a large extent, the difficulty is conceptual. That is, delimiting the distribution of some element or related elements which distinguish one segment of the time-space continum from another requires both adequate and relevant distinguishing elements chosen to constitute the region. The adequacy or relevance of the elements according to which a region is defined are related to and are alone justified by the problem at hand. Naively conceived spatial units of study have been called ‘traditional’ or ‘historical’ regions, and it is in a naive sense that terms like ‘Bengal’ or ‘Andhra’ or ‘Maharashtra’ have frequently been used. The choice of such spatial units may of course be perfectly adequate and relevant if properly defined.

The difficulty of treating broad regions as units of study as done here in the case of ‘South India’ is obvious. If it were not obvious, a review of the early historiography on the Deccan would make it so. Since R.G. Bhandarkar,[15] around the turn of the century, the ‘Deccan region’ has

received the serious attention of historians who have studied the vast, highly differentiated expanse as a single spatial entity. The presumed validity of treating the entire peninsula as a unit of study arises primarily from physical facts.

Thus the northern face of the Deccan plateau - the Vindhya- Chota Nagpur- line has been treated as an effective barrier to substantial population movement from the Gangetic plain Southward. The double impasses of the Vindhya and Satpura hills backed by the Narmada and Tapti rivers, on the western side of the peninsula and the dense jungle and deeply cut landforms in the east, justify the widely recognized status of the peninsula as a major natural region. Discontinuities in topography cannot, of themselves, however, create viable regions for the purposes of the historian or most other scholars. There are few significant social, linguistic, artistic, political, or administrative elements with which these topographic discontinuities are reliably and explicitly associated. Even as early as Ashoka, and perhaps the Mauryan precursor, Mahapadma Nanda, Gangetic military power had moved South-westward, and possibly South-eastward as well, to the coasts of the peninsula thus bypassing a large portion of the jungle-covered territory on the northern and Southern faces of the double peninsular barrier and establishing outposts in the Godavari Krishna basins. These extensions of Gangetic power were probably prompted by the availability of gold, iron, and copper. Subsequently, kingdoms of the Deccan from the Shatavahanas of the first century CE to the

Marathas of the eighteenth century CE looked as often north- ward, beyond the natural barriers of the plateau, as Southward for the extension of their tributary regions and for cultural contact.[16]

"W.M. Day" does as much in conceiving of the sub-continent as harbouring two perennial cores of civilization: the Gangetic plain with its extension into the Chambal basin, or 'Hindu-Aryan India', and the Coromandel plain with its extensions to the table lands of the interior peninsula, or 'Hindu-Dravidian India'.[17] Each of the cores consisted of great populations and each attracted the interests of quite distant people. What separated these primary cores of civilization was not simply the up thrusting Deccan plateau, but a broad cultural and political zone between the Krishna in the South and the Kaimur Range in the north. This intermediate, zone between the two, primary cores of civilization has its own ancient historical career which was consistently influenced by the developments of the Gangetic and Coromandel cores and little affected by natural barriers. It is not contended that this conception of what is, in effect, a trizonal (north-central-South) rather than the conventional bizonal (north-South) division of the subcontinent overcomes the basic difficulties of using gross division of this sort. However, for the problem at hand, this kind of distinction may serve to focus attention more clearly upon the perennially influential character of the Coromandel plain for a major part of the sub-continent. Moreover, it is ultimately to recognize that, for many

historical purposes, it may be most useful to concentrate upon nodal regions or cores, rather than upon uniform regions, or boundaries.

The term ‘South India’ has been used at times to designate the entire peninsula, but that is not its meaning here. In this study, ‘South India’ refers generally to that portion of peninsular India South of the Karnataka watershed (excluding modern Kerala) on the west, and the Krishna-Godavari delta on the east. Within this portion of the peninsula, there has existed a region characterized by a high degree of sharing of significant social, cultural, and political elements and an order of interaction such as to constitute a viable unit for the study of certain problems.

Delineating what might be called the ‘macro region’ for this study that portion of the peninsula which lies South of an imaginary line from about thirteen degrees north latitude, at the Western Ghats, to about eighteen degrees of north latitude on the Bay of Bengal, still leaves a complex, composite region. It includes most of what has been called the ‘Dravidian culture sphere’ following the linguistic usage first suggested by “Francis W. Ellis” in 1816 to describe a family of languages in the Southern peninsula.[18] “Spate” employs the term ‘Dravidian South’ to refer to this part of the sub-continent and sees it as consisting of a group of ‘perennial nuclear regions’ of which he lists: Kalinga country or Orissa, Andhra or Telugu country, Chola and Pandya parts of Tamil country, and the isolated South-western littoral of

Kerala or Malabar.[19] "A.H. Dani" has also spoken of the portion of the peninsula South of the Krishna River as a paleographic region.[20] In social terms the Southern peninsula has also been recognized as distinctive. "Irawati Karve" delineates a separate Southern zone of kinship organization which includes Karnataka, Andhra, Tamilnadu, and Kerala;[21] "Marriott", in his discussion of caste ranking among Coromandel peoples has also suggested that parts of Karnataka and Andhra share Coromandel characteristics.[22] Such general attributions alone do not justify the usage 'South India' adopted here, but they do support the definition of macro region used here by indicating its broad cultural and civilizational correlates.

Within that macro region, primacy may be accorded to the Tamil plain as a major source of the influence of civilization. The Tamil poetry of the first several centuries A.D., better than anything symbolizes this primacy, for classical, or Sangam, poetry- in the anthologized form we have it today- are creations guided by a highly sophisticated poetic canon, and the resultant poetic corpus establishes the Tamil language as the most enduring, living classical tradition in India. Institutions of Sanskrit and Prakrit learning were contemporary with the production of most classical Tamil poems and clearly influenced this latter poetic tradition. The very term *Sangam* to designate this poetry derives from a Jaina learned community (sangha) established at Madurai during the late fifth century that provided not merely grammatical models to Tamil poets. Ghatikas and other institutions of high learning in the

Tamil plain of this time and later attracted men from everywhere in the South Indian macro region, even those from distant Banavasi in northern Karnataka from where Mayurvarma, founder of the Kadamba dynasty, came for education in Kanchi (Kancipuram). In this South-eastern coastal lowland, from the fifth century, a civilization developed whose social and cultural forms profoundly influenced people over a great portion of the Southern peninsula. A substantial part of this influence was carried by people of the Tamil plain as the peasant agrarian system, there expanded during the Chola period. In fact, the macro region is almost conterminous with the maximal extent of the Chola overlordship, and the provenance of Tamil language inscriptions of this period helps to define the macro region as much as other evidence.[23]

Thus, a part of the modern state of Karnataka-its heartland consisting of the modern districts of Mysore, Bangalore, and Kolar once comprised an area of Tamil influence called Karmandalam, a name which persisted in Tamil usage long after the time when the territorial name Gangavadi replaced it among Kannada speakers. There were similar extensions of dominance by Tamil speakers peasant settlers and warriors-northward over the Andhra plain to the delta formed by the Krishna and Godavari rivers. Modern Nellore was within the over lordship of Rajaraja I and, under the last of the great Chola overlords, Kulottunga I, the Krishna-Godavari delta was firmly within the over lordship of the Cholas based in the Tamil plain. Along with this expansion of peasant peoples of the Tamil plain and the Chola over lordship into territories

contiguous to the coastal lowland, including portions of modern Karnataka and Andhra as well as the uplands of modern Coimbatore and Salem, went many elements of culture and society. Such elements were transformed, of course, especially in interaction with Andhra and Karnataka cultures. These other Dravidian language cultures, though less ancient or refined in literary terms, and without a corpus of literature of classical antiquity such as existed in Tamil, underwent continuous development during the medieval age. [24]

Each of these South Indian cultural traditions so changed as to constitute distinctive subcultural variations, each substantially and, over time increasingly, different from the early Tamil culture of the plain proper. Even after these cultural traditions had emerged a mature after the thirteenth century, there were continued influences from the core of Tamil civilization in religion, for example, while a reverse flow of political power emanating now from the northern territories under the Vijayanagara overlords was carried by peasant warriors who were possibly, in many cases, descendants of the earlier migrants to the north. Such interactions between the core of Tamil civilization in the coastal plain with those territories which had been extensions of the plain produced a supracultural zone and contributed to the distinctive macro region and directly influenced the peasant society of South India.[25]

Physical elements of the macro region are complex. The Southern portion of the peninsula shares with the northern portion a peninsular configuration. Both parts of the peninsula are linked by the old and stable Deccan plateau formation comprising the core of the entire peninsula. The plateau has affected the pattern of settlement over much of the peninsula because, as a result of its geomorphological character, fertile lands capable of supporting relatively dense populations were scattered and isolated nodes of prosperity and civilization surrounded by forest clad uplands capable of supporting small, and often predatory, populations. Spate's four 'perennial nuclear regions' of the 'Dravidian South' alerts one to this scatter configuration. However, within each of these four regions Kalinga, Andhra, Chola, and Pandya countries further sub-regions may be delineated consisting of small clusters of sedentary, advanced peoples amidst forest and hill peoples. Spatial relationships resulting from the pattern of isolated settlement and one other major factor - the significance of the sea - have critical historical importance for the macro region under discussion; these characteristics are shared by both portions of peninsular India (i.e. 'South India' and the Deccan) in contrast to most of the continental portions of the sub-continent.[26]

Within 'South India' itself, the most important element relating to historical agrarian relations is the Coromandel plain on the eastern littoral, extending from the tip of the peninsula to the northern edge of the broad delta

of the Godavari and Krishna rivers. Never deeper than one hundred miles, in the Kaveri basin, this lowland is moulded into a complex structure by the rocky extensions of a broken range of low hills that parallel the coast, called the ‘Eastern Ghats’, and by patches of lateritic soils and rocky marine deposits. The Coromandel plain is traversed by streams draining these broken hill ranges as well as those of the more imposing highland blocks of the western side of the peninsula, the ‘Western Ghats’, including the Nilgiris in the north and the Annamalai, Palni, and Cardamom hills in the South. Peaks of this western highland attain an elevation of 8,000 feet. The most important streams are the Godavari, Kishna and Kaveri, each of which forms extensive, fertile deltas; other important rivers are the Penner (or North Penner), Palar, Ponnaiyar (or South Penner), Tambraparni, and Vaigai.[27]

Using the attributional and interactional markers discussed above, it is possible to delimit the macro region of ‘South India’ as understood here from other parts of the Southern peninsula. Specifically, this study will deal with what is called Dravidian kinship or culture including Tamilnadu, Karnataka, Kerala and Andhra Pradesh.

Scope of Research

Thematically the Scope of this Research is to analyse the development of caste System in ancient South India. Chronogically, it deals with the period from about 1st century C.E. to about 12th century CE Geographically the

research covers present day Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh states of South India.

Importance of the Research

Caste System has been an established institution of Indian society since time immemorial. Hitherto many researchers have tried to throw light on caste system and untouchability in their own states or under particular dynasty. The importance of the present research lies in the fact that it is undertaken to analyse the genesis of Caste System in the whole Ancient South India comparatively from 1st Century CE to 900. CE.

Aims and Objectives

The present research is undertaken with the following aims and objectives.

1. To study the Political History of Ancient South India
2. To analyse the Genesis and development of Caste system in Ancient India
3. To analyse the Genesis and development of Caste system in Ancient Karnataka
4. To analyse the Genesis and development of Caste system in Ancient South India
5. To analyse the differences between caste practices in North and South India

Hypothesis of the Research

On the basis of the study of some sources research works done. So far the following hypothesis were formulated.

1. The history of ancient South India covers a span of over thousand years during which the region saw the rise and fall of a number of dynasties and empires.
2. Dynasties of Pandyas, Cholas, Cheras,Shatavahana, Chalukya, Pallava, Rashtrakuta, Kakatiya and Hoysala were at their peak during various periods of history.
3. Theory of division of mankind into four varnas or groups of castes such as Brahmanaa, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Sudra was wholly foreign to the Southern Dravidians.
4. The Caste System in Ancient South India was different than that of North India
5. The ancient South India the people were divided into five different clans ("kudis") based on their profession not on Varna or birth.

Research Methodology

With an intention to develop pure historical perspective, it is proposed to apply the means, methods and techniques falling within the historical methods. In other words, the entire research has been based on the

contemporary and near contemporary historical sources like literary works, inscriptions, secondary sources, Tamil works etc. The entire research is based on the caste system in ancient south India. But wherever records fail to give full explanation to the mechanism and functioning of the caste system, conceptual methodology has been relayed upon.

The research of historical method requires the study of plenty of contemporary literature for the purpose of finding of truth in history and corresponding with already established truth on historical evidences. During the recent years the research in history is perceived by new several methods like oral, documentation, annals, traditions, subalterns, statistical methods, quantitative analysis, besides the traditional historical method, which is the most suitable methodology required in developing perspective in the present study. The validity of the authencity of sources which are proved by means of internal and external criticism.

But, the difficulties of the research scholars especially working on the aspects of culture, civilization and caste system are many. The main problem though an unique the most neglected and rarely thought as an important field in the history by most, the culture historian of each one of the classified sources may be outlined as follows. The literary sources are more elaborated and explicit and therefore reflect the various facts of culture in a lucid style and comprehensive manner.

Review of Literature

The origin, rise genesis and growth of caste system in ancient south India is a significant epoch in the annals of Indian History. "G.S. Ghurye's" work can be considered as the bible to know the features of the caste system in different regions, he also says about the nature of the caste groups, subcastes, tribes in various regions. He further says about the caste through the Ages, right from the Rig Vedic period to the earliest stage. He explained the origin of the four classes; the Taittiriya Samhita is an immortal work throws a flash of light on four classes. He further states that when the Aryans occupied in the North, at this hour the Dravidian may have moved to the Southern India. So thanks to "G.S. Ghurye" who have taken the lead in this perspective. In ancient India there was no linguistic barriers, it has nothing to do with caste. During this hour many social and religious reforms took place where the people lived in harmony and peace. "John Fryer", says when he played his visit in 1670 to India, he has come across more than 200 hundred castes were existing. "F.J. Richards" who has done research in the case of Salem district observes, the unit of Hindu society is the endogamous group or sub caste. The descriptions of the sub caste of Hindustani caste given by "Shearing" illustrates that the Barhal or Carpenter caste of Hindustan that its seven sub-caste are so distinct from one another that they hold no direct social intercourse with each other, either by marriages or by eating or

smoking together. At the same time “Jackson” terms that caste-society was a force, affecting such social intercourse, in the beginning of the nineteenth century linguistics boundaries fixed the caste limits. In the south i.e., the south Indian Brahmins carry their religious differences to such an extent that generally the smart as and Vaishnavas are regarded as sub caste. “Gautam Buddha” says, men who do their duty honestly and dedicatedly, will be rewarded and enjoy after death. In the literature work “Apastamba”, it states that, sinful persons are born as low castes and even as animals. “T.V Mahalingam”, in his Administration and Social life under Vijayanagar states about the social divisions, he also says that the caste system was inextricably interwoven with religion. The anxiety of the rulers to maintain the social solidarity of the Hindus is clearly seen in the titles they assumed such as the supporter of the four castes and orders. He also says about the social institution prevailing during the times of Medieval, “K.K. Pillay”, in his Tamil society in the early and medieval periods, says that caste system in the Tamil country was introduced by the Aryans. He says that the institutions of caste, the typical Hindu social organizations was a creation of the Aryans.

“Stein Burton’s” work peasant state and society in medieval south India, he comes across and he speak about the Brahminical dominance in the region of south India i.e., Karnataka, Kerala, Tamilnadu and Andhra Pradesh. He says that the Braham locality power associated with land control. “Edgar

Thurston" gives us information of castes and tribes of southern India. He says how the caste were divided into tribes and their various aspects. Next is the changing role of the caste system by "Sangeet Kumar" gives us a vivid picture of the caste system through history, the caste system in the contemporary period and present and future of the caste system.

"Bougle", has explained caste as hereditary specialised and hierarchiacally arranged groups. He has given three characteristics of the caste system, hierarchy, hereditary, specialisation and repulsion. Next "Srinivas" and "Dumont" consider caste system as a cultural reality. According to them, the caste system is a unique system as it is based on Hindu religion which is found only in India. These sociologists stree the pre-eminence of religious values in the caste system. "Barth" and "Berreman" consider caste as a structural phenomenon. According to this view, caste at the level of social relationship, is based on role and status and not on values. The studies of Hutton, Hocart, Myrdal, Leach and Marriot, Lewis etc., highlighted the fact that caste would adopt itself to meet the challenges and exigencies of a variety of situations.

Chapterisation of the Thesis

Depending on the theme of the theme of the topic, convenience of sources the present thesis is divided into **Six** chapters

Chapter I Introduction, which deals with the short introduction on origin meaning and characteristics of system in India Scope of the research, Importance of the research, Aims and objectives of the research, Hypothesis of the Research, Research Methodology adopted and Chapterisation of the Thesis.

Chapter II Political History of Ancient South India, which gives us glimpse of political history of ancient South India with reference to Sangamas, (Pandyas, Cholas, Cheras, Sangam) polity, Shatavahanas, Pallavas, Badami Chalukyas, Kalyani Chalukyas, and Chalukyas of Vengi, Kadambas and Gangas.

Chapter III Origins and Growth of Caste System in India, where the genesis of caste system in India since earliest i.e., RigVedic period to the British Period are dealt where in The Beginning of the Caste System in India, The Possible Genetic Origin of Caste System, References of Caste System in Hindu scriptures (such as Rigveda, Manusmriti, Epics, etc), Historical Records about Caste System in India, Evolution of Rigid Caste Structures in India, Mobility across the Castes, Historical Advantages of the Caste System, Caste System under British rule, Reform Movements for Eradication of Caste System, are dealt in.

Chapter IV Caste System in Ancient South India, where the genesis, development of caste system in ancient South India is analysed during the

period from Pandyas to Hoysalas i.e., during the Pandyas, Cholas, Cheras Shatavahanas Chalukya, Pallava, Rashtrakuta, Kakatiya and Hoysala.

Chapter V The Right and Left Hand Division (**Valangai and Idangai**) where the origins and growth of Right and hand division of the society in ancient to Medieval South India is analysed through the study of available inscriptions or epigraphical evidences and ancient texts like Silapadikaram, Purananuru, Ahananuru etc., translated by Tamil experts.

Chapter VI Conclusion which forms the findings and conclusion of the researcher from the analysis of the above chapters

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CHAPTER II

POLITICAL HISTORY OF ANCIENT SOUTH INDIA

The political history of ancient South India has occupied its own significance and it helps us to reconstruct the history of South India with the help of inscriptions, coins, copper plates, engravings etc. The literary records also help us to better understand the political history, prevailing during the times of particular ruler. So in this regard some of the ancient South Indian dynasties and their political rule and their achievements are mentioned below.

The history of ancient South Indian throws a flash of light on various achievements and events recorded to study the situation and existing condition, the conquests, the treaties and their political stability to control and expand the regions from boundary to boundary.

The Sangam Dynasty

In ancient times, the region of peninsular India lying to the South of the Vindhy Mountains was known as Dakshinapatha. It consisted mainly of the kingdoms situated in two geographical regions. The Deccan Plateau lay between the river Narmada in the north and the Krishna and Tungabhadra in the South. The Tamil country included in the territory to the South of these rivers, Krishna and Tungabhadra extending to Cape Comorin. In this region

were the kingdoms of the Pandya, the Chera and the Chola. In ancient times the whole region was inhabited by people of Dravidian origin.[1]

Historical Background

The extreme South of India from Tirupati Hill (Vegadam) to Cape Comorin (Kanyakumari), bounded by the sea on the east and west was known as Tamilagam or Tamilham (The Tamilrealm). By fourth century B.C., it had becomes subject of strong Aryan or Northern influence, though the Pre-Aryan (Tamil) culture and language continued to flourish here in much greater strength then in the rest of India. Our knowledge of history of the country before the Christian era is however, rather vague and indirect. A Scholium of Katyayana on Panini which derives the word Pandya from Pandu, thus relating the royal family of the extreme South with the Pandavas of the great epic, and the references to the Pandyan country in Megasthenes and Kautilya are among the earliest data now accessible to us.

The second and thirteenth rock edicts of Ashoka mention the Southern kingdoms and Sri Lanka. The list in the second edict, which is longer, comprises by name, the Cholas, Pandyas, Satiyapura and Keralyputra, besides Tambraparni. The Tamils in fact believed, that the three monarchies of the Cheras, Cholas and Pandyaa were of immortal antiquity, dating from the time of creation.[2]

Of the three Tamil monarchies the Pandya country occupied the extreme South and included the modern districts of Tirunelveli, Madurai and

Ramnad, besides South Travancore, often called Nanjinad, plough land. Its capital was Madurai, the city on the Vaigai river, and Korkai on the east coast at the mouth of the Tambraparni river was its main seaport, though we here of another port further north by name Saliyar. These must have been some port or ports on the west coast as well around about modern Trivendrum. The Chola country comprised the lower Kaveri Vally, the coastal plain between two rivers, both bearing the name Vellore, the north Vellore entering the sea near Porto Novo, and the smaller Southern stream passing through P.V.Dukkottai territory. The Chola kingdom though roughly corresponded to modern Tanjore and Tiruchirapalli districts, its inland capital and Uraiynr and Puhar or Kaveri-patanam (The Khaberis of Ptolemy) at the mouth of the Kaveri was its main port. The Chera of Kerala kingdom was the western coastal strip above the northern limit of the Pandyan kingdom. It had a number of good ports, Tondi and Musiri or Muziris being the best known. The capital of the Chera kingdom was called Vanji and its location has been subjected of an in conclusive debate, some identifying it with some place on the Periyar River or as its mouth, others locating it inland in Karur or Karuvur, the centre of the western most taluka of Tiruchirapalli.

The Pandyan Dynasty

The Pandyas ruled over an area consisting of the modern day Southern Tamil Nadu. Their capital was Madurai. They ruled the parts of the South India until 15th century A.D. they are mentioned in the Ashokan edicts in the

Ramayana and Mahabharata. The Pandyas are rightly most famous for patronising the poets and scholars of the Tamil Sangams. During the 13th century A.D, Marco Polo mentioned it as the richest empire in existence.[3]

From the Maduraikkanji of Mangudi, Marudan states about tree of Nedunjeliyan's predecessors on the Pandyan throne. The first is an almost mythical figure called Nediyon. Te next is Palsalai Mudukudumi. The third ruler mentioned in the Maduraikkanji was another Nedunjeliyan. The tragedy of Kodavan's death at Madurai occurred in his region, which according to the Silappadigaram caused the king to die broken heart.

Nedunjeliyan of Talaiyalanganam came to the throne as a youth and soon after his accession he proved himself more then equal to a hostile combination of his two neighbouring monarchs and five minor chieftain's. When his enemies invaded his kingdom, Nedunjeliayan enflicted a crushing defeat on them at Talaiyalanganan about eight miles north-west of Tiruvallur in the Tajore district. By this victory Nedunjeliyan not only made himself secured, but gained a primary over the entire state system of the Tamil country.

Then Madurai Kanji contains a full length description of Madurai and the Pandyan country under Nedunjeliyan's rule. Its author also refers to the battle of Alanganam calls his patron lord of Korkai and the warlord of the Southern paradavar, hinting that the people of the pearl-fishing coast formed an important section of his army. The list of the pandyan kings are based on the

authoritative “A History of South India from the early times to the fall of Vijayanagar” by K.A.N Sastri.[4]

Koon Pandyan
↓
Nedunj Cheliyan I (Aariyap Kadantha Nedunj Cheliyan)
↓
Pundappandiyan
↓
Mudukudumi paruvalndhi
↓
Nedunj Cheliyan II
↓
Nan Maran
↓
Nedunj Cheliyan III
↓
Maran Valundi
↓
Kadalan Valundi
↓
Musiri Mutriya Cheliyan
↓
Kadalul maintha Ukkirap Peruvaludi

The Cholas

The cholas were one of the oldest ruling dynasties of the South. The Chola domain was known as Tondiamandalam or Cholamandalam, with the capital at Uraiyur in Tiruchirapalli district and subsequently at Kaveripattan or Purhar, founded by the Chola king Karikala(190 A.D) who was most famous among the Sangam. He was a contemporary of the Chera king Perunjeral Adani. Elara was the first important chola king (middle of the second century B.C). His important lies in his conquest of Sri Lanka.

Karikala means ‘the man with charred leg’ early in life he was deposed and imprisoned. The way in which he escaped and re-established himself on the throne is well portrayed by the author of Pattenappalai, a long poem on the Chola capital kaveripattanam in the Pattuppattu. One of his early achievement was the victory at Venni, 15 miles to the east of Tanjore. His victory meant breakup of the confederacy that had been formed against him. Another important battle he fought was at Vahaipparandali, where nine minor enemy chieftains had to submit Karikala’s wars, thus resulted in his establishing a sort or hegemony among the kings of the Tamil country and in some extension of the territory under his direct rule.

Karikala also promoted the reclamation and settlement of forest land and added to the prosperity of kingdom. As a fallower of the Vedic religion, he performed sacrifices. In later times Karikala become the centre of many legends found in the shilappadigaram. They attributed to him the construction, with the aid of his feudatories of the flood banks of Kaveri. Ilanjetcenni of Neyadalangandal captured two fortresses from the Cheras, Senganan, and the Chola monarch famed in legend for his devotion to Shiva, figures as the victor in battle of Por against the Chera Kanaikkal Irumporai. This monarch, who built 70 fine temples of Shiva lived in the fourth or fifth century A.D.[5]

Aditya I (871-907 A.D) son and successor of Vijayalaya, took part in the battle of Sri Purambiyam in which the Pandyas were defeated by the

Pallavas. Aditya I conquered the Kongudesa (the district of Coimbatore and Selam) from the Pandyas and the weastern Gangas. He also captured the capital of Gangas called Talakadu.

Parantaka I

Aditya I was succeeded by his son Parantaka who ruled for more than forty five years (907-953 A.D) he led many military campaigns against western Gangas, the Kerals ruler and the Kodumbalur chiefs. He ruled Madura and won the title of Madhurantaka (destroyer of Madura). In 915 A.D famous battle was fought where Parantaka I defeated the Pandya king, Rajasimha II and the Sinhalese. In 915 A.D Banas were up rooted by Parantaka. He also defeated Vaidumbas of the Renandu country who were the alies of the Banas Parantaka I defeated the Pallavas and conquered Nellore. He extended his kingdom from the North pennur to Cape Comorin and bounded on the west by the Chera and western Ganga kingdom. The Rastrakuta king Krishna II invaded Tondamandalam with the help of Butuga II, the western Ganga chief is stated in Atakur, inscription, several inscriptions of Krishna found in Tondamandalam described him as the Captor of Kanchi and Tanjire. The Rastrakuta interregnum in Tondamandalam and lasted for fifteen years from 953 to 968 A.D.

Parantaka I was succeeded by his second son Gandaraditya. Next Gandaraditya was succeeded by Arunjaya, he was active against the

Pandyas, who were independent under vira Pandya and the letter was defeated in spite of the Sinhalese aid he had secured. The Pandya was led to an expedition to Ceylon Tondamandalam was recovered from the Rastrakutas. Sudara Chola died at Kanchi and Vanavan Mahadevi, the mother of Rajaraja I committed sati. Later Aditya II was murdered at the instigation of Uttama Chola, who coveted the throne, as he belonged to the senior branch of the royal family. The history of early Cholas, there is very little authentic written evidence available. Historians during the past 150 years here gleaned a lot of knowledge on the subject from a variety of source such as ancient Tamil Sangam literature, oral traditions religions texts, temple and copper plate inscriptions. The main source available for the better understanding of Cholas is the early Tamil literature of the Sangam period [6]. Periplus of the Erthraeam sea [7] also gives detail note on towns, ports and commerce. The geographer Ptolemy [8] gives more details about Chola country, its ports and its inland cities Mahavarma,[9] a Buddhist text written in 5th century A.D, recollects a number of conflicts between the inhabitants of Ceylon and Cholas in the 1st century A.D. Cholas are mentioned in the pillars of Ashoka inscribed [10] 273 – 232 A D**.**

The Cheras

The Cheras were one of the ruling dynasties of the Sangam age, who ruled over parts of Kerala and Tamilham. The earliest king was Udiyanjeral

(130 C.A.D). the titles Vanararamban and Perunjoran Udiyan are applied to him by the poet Mudinagarayar in Puram. He later was succeeded by his son Imayavaramaban. Nedunjeral Adan (155 C.A.D), who is said to have overthrown the rules of the Kadamba dynasty and destroyed his guardian tree. In another work, he is said to have captured several Yavanas, and not released them until he received a heavy ransom in the form of diamonds and many utensils of fine work manship. But the greatest Chera king was Sanguttnvan or Red Chera, who was contemporary of the poet Paranar. Paranar describes a number of the conquest of Senaguttumvan, including a campaign to North India to get a Himalayan Stone to make an idol of Goddess Kannagi (the Goddess Chastity). According to Silappadikaram, the monarch was the founder of the famous Pattini cult related to the worship of the goddess of chastity, which after became common in South India and Sri Lanka.

Senaguttuvan was succeeded by his brother Perunjeral (180 A D), who was a contemporary of the great Chola monarch Karikala. We learn from the poems Puram and Aham, the Cholas and Cheras fought many wars. The Chera dynasty declined at the beginning of the third century A. D, but its fame lies in liberal patronage to Tamil poets and promotion of trade with the Romans. The famous Chera port Muziris was a great centre of Indo-Roman trade.[11]

Mention has been made of an inscription on the Arnattamalai hill, pugalur, assignable to the first century of the Christian era, which refers to three generations of Chera rulers Ko-Adan-Cel-Irumpurai, his son perumkadungo, and his son Ilamkadungo.[12]

The discovery of Chera inscriptions near Karur and of thousands of Roman coins in Karur and its neighbourhood and Ptolemy's statement that the inland city of Korura was the Chera capital also point to the same conclusion. The recent archaeological excavations at this site, especially the find of Roman amphorae pieces conclusively prove the identity of modern Karur with the Vanji of the Sangam age. [13]

Etymology and Sources

The word Chera meaning 'hill country ' is derived from Cheral, meaning mountain slope in classical Tamil [14]. The Chera kings were called Chera-alatom (Lord of the Hills/slopes) [15]. The word 'Kerala' was derived from "Cheralam". But Ashoka's edicts mention his tributary dynasty known by the name Kedalapitho (Keralaputra) who were outside Ashoka's empire in 261 B.C. Kharavela, the kalinga king who ruled during the 2nd century B.C, in his Hathigumpha inscriptions, claims to have destroyed a confederary of Tamil states which lasted 132 years.[16] The only literary sources available regarding the early Chera kings are the anthologies of Sangam literature, now generally agreed to created in the first few centuries A.D.[17] Sangam literature is full of

names of kings and princes along with the poets who extolled them but these are not worked into connected history so far and the chronology is not settled. Pathirruppaththu, the fourth book in the Ettuthokai anthology, mentions the order of the Chera kings. Each ruler is proised in ten songs sung by the court poet and they run as below,

Unknown ruler
↓
Nedum Cheralathan
↓
Palayane Chel Kezhu Kuttuvan
↓
Narmudi Chera – Kappiyarrak Kppiyanar
↓
Senguttuvan Chera
↓
Adu Kottu Pattu Cheratalhan
↓
Selvakadumko Valiathan
↓
Perum Cherai Irumporai
↓
Illam Cheral Irumporai
↓
Unknown ruler

Archaeology was found epigraphic evidence of the early cheras in recorded history of South India.[18] Some inscriptions trace the dynasty even from the mythical puranic kings. Two identical inscriptions at Pugalur dated to 2nd century describe three generations of Chera rulers of the Irumporai clan. Inscriptions found at Edakkal caves as “Kadummipudha Chera”.[19]

The history of Pandya, Chola and Chera is not very clear due to inadequate of sources. To reconstruct the political history of the Sangams we have rely upon the Sangam literaturesome times even the Sangam literature fail to give vivid picture about the chronology and geneology of the Sangam rulers. But a fair attempt has been made to reach the root level of the Sangama polity by depending upon the contemporary records, inscriptions and secondary sources, which helps us to satisfy and understand the political history of Sangams.

The Sangam Polity

From the earliest times Tamilaham had known only three Major kings, the Pandya, Chola, Chera. The usual order in which the three Tamil kingdoms are mentioned in a single expression. The Pandyaa were known as Minawar, Kavuriyar, Panchawar, Tennar, seliyar, Marar, Valndi and So on. The Chola were known as Sennis, Sembiyas, Valwan and Killi. Senni means head and so the Chola was a Senni (meaning leader). The Cheras were known by many equivalent titles Varavar, Villawar, Kudnar, Kuttnvar, Poroiyar Malaiyar and so on.[20]

It is almost impossible to formulate the political history of the three ruling dynasties of the period because first it was not the purpose of the Sangam poets to describe the history of their Patrons and secondly, whatever political events they have discussed are highly exaggerated, often even the chronology of the rulers of the three respective dynasties is not clear. On the

basis of the available sources. Within the reach the Sangam polity is tried to be an understood to the possible extent.

The Shatavahana Dynasty

In the Deccan, the Mauryan Empire was followed by the rule of the Shatavahanas, which lasted for four and a half centuries from about 230 B.C [21]. The Shatavahanas kings were described as the lords of the Dakshinapatha. The extent of the Dakshinapatha however varied according to different authorities while some include in it the whole of trans vindhyan peninsular India others equate it with a major portion of the table land of South india below the Vindhyas comprising the present territories of Andhra, Maharastra and karnataka. Thus great dynasty which endured for more than four centuries had several distinguished rulres like Gautamiputra Satakarni, Vasistaputra Pulamayi and Yajnasri, their commercial trade was active between India and the wetstern world. They encouraged Buddhist religion although they were the followers of the Brahmanaism. [22]

Origin

In epigraphical records rulers of this dynasty are described as belonging to Shatavahana – Kula while in the puranas they are referred to as Andhra and Andhra-Bhrityas (Andhra servants). Many imply that the ancestors of the royal Shatavahanas were employed in the service of the Mauryan empire and thus moved into the western Deccan where they set up an independent state when the empire declined after Ashoka kings in the

puranic lists figure also in inscriptions and on coins found in the western Deccan at Nasik, Kerala and Naneghat. Kharavela of Kalinga states clearly that the territories of the Shatavahana king Satakarni lay to the west of his kingdom. From these facts we may conclude that the Shatavahanas rose to power in the western Deccan, in the region round about Paithan (Pratishthana) traditionally associated with them and hence spread their empire in all directions.

The exact date of the foundation of Shatavahana power cannot be determined, but the Puranic lists suggest that the first king, Simuka, probably began to sign about 230 B.C. [23]

The early Shatavahanas ruled Andhra and present Telangana region which was always their heartland. The Puranas list 30 Andhra rulers many are known from their coins and inscriptions as well. The early Shatavahanas rulers were Simuka (230-207 C. B.C) and Satakarni (180-124 C. B.C). [24]

According to K.A. Nilakantasastri, Simukha (230 BC) who ruled for 23 years and later succeeded by his brother Kanha (207-189 B.C) he saya that according to puranic lists suggests that the first king, Simukha began his regime about 230 B.C. the script of (Nasik inscription [25] says Kanha (Krishna) the second king of the Shatavahanas, which has been assigned by "Buhler" to the times of the last Mauryas or the earlist sungas, in the beginning of the second century B.C. the third king was Sri Satakarni I, whose figure was sculptured in rilievo at Naneghat along with the figures of his father Simukha,

his queen Naganika, a Maharathi and three princes. He conquered western Malwa and an inscription of his queen records his performance of certain great sacrifices and the fees paid to the officiating priests, including teas of thousands of cows. Satakarni proclaimed his suzerainty by performing the horse-sacrifice and the victory thus celebrated must have been at the expense of the Sungas, the imperical power of the North. In the drama Malavikagnimetra, Kalidasa mentioned a victory of the Sungas over the Andhras, which was doubtless episode in the struggle which ended with the final victory of the Andharas.

Shatakarni II, the sixth king had the longest region of 56 years. He wrested Malva from the Sungas and established his swary over that region. He seems to have extended his empire to Madhya Pradesh. Hala, the seventeenth ruler, become famous in literature as the compiler of Sattasai a collection of 700 erotic gathas in the Arya metre in maharastri prakrit. According to Lilavati parinaya, Hala conquered Sri Lanka and married to princess of Sri Lanka at Sapta-Godavari, identified with Draksharama in the east Godaveri district.

Gautamiputra Satakarni

He was the greatest among the Shatavahanas. Gautamiputra Satakarni realised these ends by devastating the foreign hordes of the Scythions along with the Indo-Greeks and the Parthians who had joined

hands with them to encroach upon the territories of western and central India and had penetrated into the Deccan. Gautamiputra's deadly enemy was Saka Nahapana of the Kshaharata family whom, he routed and killed onthe battle field. He is called the "Destroyer of the Saka", "Yavanas" and "Pahalvas" extirpator of the Kshaharata dynasty and establisher of the glory of the Shatavahanas family. His events are recorded in glowing terms in an inscription at Nasik engraved after his death in the nineteenth year of his son and successor, Pulumiyi II [26] Gautamiputra Satakarni ruled for twenty five years from about A.D. 106-A.D 130 however his region suffered defeat at the hands of Mahakshaharata Rudradaman of the Saka family. As a result some Northern parts conquered earlier were lost to Sakas.

Vasishtaputra Pulumayi

He succeeded his father Gautamiputra Satakarni and ruled for twenty nine years from about 130 to 159 A.D. his kingdom extended to east in the region of the mouth of the Krishna. In the South the Bellary region seems to have been annexed to the Shatavahana Empire during his period.

Yajnasri Satakarni ruled from 174 to 203 A.D. he routed the power of the Sakas in the Northern and western parts of the India. His inscriptions found at Banavasi, Nasik, Kanheri, Kerala and Amaravati and coins obtained from the Saurastra, Maharastra, northern Karnataka and coastal Andhra indicate the extent of his domenions. He was the last grest ruler of this family.

Later the successor of Yajnasri Satakarni was weak. Thus the Shatavahanas were the earliest Southern rulers who established their soverignity over large tracts of Central, Western, Eastern and Southern India and rose to imperical emenience.

The history of Shatavahanas is tried to reconstruct with the help of epigraphical records and coins recently discoverd, besides literary works. The outline history of the Shatavahnas is been drawn out with the help of inscriptions coins and copper plates found in different parts of South India. The chronology of the dynasty varies from author to author. But however with the help of the little data available form information has been collected and presented in a unique way about the kings of this dynasty.

The Pallava Dynasty

The Pallava dynasty ruled northern Tamil Nadu and Southern Andhra Pradesh of present day India with their capital at kanchi. They established themselves as a notable rising power in the region in third-fourth century and by the beginningof the seventh A.D. the Pallavas along with the Chalukyas of Badami and the Pandyas of Madhurai, emerged to be the three Major states of Southern India.

The term Pallava means creeper and is a Sanskrit version of the Tamil word tondal. The Pallavas were a local tribe with their authority in the

Tondainadu. The Pallavas gained prominence after the eclipse of the Shatavahana dynasty, which the Pallavas served as feudatories. [27]

The political confusion that reigned in the Tamil country after the incursion of the Kalabharas was ended in the last quarter of the sixth century by the activities of two monarchs, the Pallava Simhavishnu and the Pandya Kadungon with their capitals at Kanchi and Madurai respectively. Simhavishnu was the son of Simhasharman one of whose copper plate grants dated in the sixth year of his region has turned up recently, it records a grant to Jain institution a contemporary Ganga copper plate records another gift to the jainas made by Simhavishnus mother and without giving any historical details of the reigning king, it details the achievements of his son who must have been Yuvaraja. So we may consider Simhavishnu the virtual founder of the Pallava power in this period. The new inscription states the he over threw another Simhavishnu, perhaps a Telugu Chola ruler and the Bhrajishnu-Vasma (literary shining family), perhaps meaning Oliyar). Further, Simhavishnu not only suppressed the kalabhras but conquered the whole country up to the Kaveri and even came into conflict with the Pandyas and the ruler of Ceylon. He was a worshipper of Vishnu and had the title Avanisimha (loin of the earth).

Herostones of the reign of simhavishnu and his father, shimhavishnu and his father, Simhavarman, have been found recently, the highest regnal year so far found for Simhavishnu in the thirty-third, so he may be taken to

have ruled from 555 to 590 AD. He was followed by Mahendravarman I. He had many titles such as Mathavilasa, Vicitra-Citta and Gunabhara. He professed Jainism for a time, but discarded it in favour of Saivism, possibly under the influence of Appar. At the beginning of his region (590-630 AD) as in that of his father Pallava rule extended in the north up to the river Krishna and bordered on the kingdom of the Kandaras and Vishnu Kundins.

The Pallavas captured Kanchi from the Chola as recorded in the Velurpalaiyan plates, around the reign of the fifth king of the Pallava the Kumaravishnu I. There after Kanchi figures in inscriptions as the capital of the pallavas. The Cholas drove the Pallava away from Kanchi in the mid of 4th C.A.D, in the reign of Vishugopa, the Vishugopa was defeated and then liberated by Samudra Gupta of the Gupta empire. The Pallavas re-captured Kanchi in the mid of the 6th century, possible in the reign of Simhavishnu, the fourteenth king of the Pallava line whom the Kasakudi plates state as "the loin of the earth". Thereafter the pallavas held on to Kanchi till the 9th century A.D, with the last king having been Vijaya Nrupatungavarma. [28]

The Conflict between the Chalukyas and the Pallavas

Pulakeshi II sought to measure the strength against Mahendravarman I whose growing power rivalled his own. His force penetrated far into the Pallava territory and were not stopped until they reached pullallur. Only fifteen miles north of the Pallava capital. There a pitched battle was fought and although Mahendravarman was able to save his capital, he lost northern

provinces to his enemy. This was the beginning of the long drown out conflict between the Chalukyan and the Pallavas.

After his return (621 C.A.D) Pulakeshi sent Vishnuvardhana to rule over the Andhra country as viceroy and complete the process of conquest. Then with his brother's approval, he founded a dynasty of rulers who held sway in the Telugu country for over five centuries thereafter.

Pulakeshin's ambition promoted him to undertake another expendition against the pallavas in the hope of achieving more decisive results. Mahendravarman I had quitted the stage and his son Narasimhavarman I Mahamalla (630-668A.D) had began his rule. Pulakeshin made and attack on Banas who were ruling in Rayalaseema as fendatories of the Pallavas. But Narasimhavarman defeated the Chalukayas in several battles including one at Manimangala about 20 miles to the east of kanchipuram. In these battle Narasimha was ably assisted by a Ceylonese princes Manavarman Pulakeshins expedition was thus a failure and was soon followed by terrible moved towards the capital of Badami, the Chalukyas capital, made himself the master of the city and fortress, Pulakeshi II must have fallen fighting. Here Narasimhanvarman got title as "Vatapiconda" which is recorded in an inscription engraved on a rock behind the temple of Mallikarjunadeva in Badami and defeated in the thirteenth year of his reign. [29]

The pallava monarch must have returned to his capital soon after 642 A.D, thereafter he sent two expeditions to Ceylon to aid Manavarman though

the second expedition was successful and Manavarman put the rival king to death and captured Anuradhpura, he was later once more driven into exile and he sought refuge in the Pallava court probable after the death of Narasimhavarman.

Narasimhavarman died about 668 A.D, and was succeeded by his son Mahendravarman II who in his short reign came into conflict with Vikramaditya I. Mahendaravaman was followed in his turn by his son Parameshvaravarman I, in whose reign Challukya Vikramaditya renewed his conflict. Having secured the alliances of the contemporary Pandya ruler Arikesari Parankusa Maravarman I (670-700 A.D).

There was a lull in the conflict between the Chalukyas and Pallavas during the genrally peaceful and prosperous reign of Vikramaditya’s son Vinayadity (681-696 A.D). Vinayaditya led an expedition into Northern India, in which his son Vijayaditya greatly distinguished himself, but that is all Vijayaditya’s was the longest reign (969-733) of the Badami period and perhaps also the most prosperous and peaceful. He was followed by his sone Vikramaditya II (733-44) in the first years of whose reign the Arabs who had established themselves in Sind and conquered the neighbouring hands made a push into the deccan, but were stopped effectively by Pulakeshin a son of that Jayasimhavarma who had stood by his brother, Vikramaditya I. Vikramaditya II so appreciated the service of Avani janasraya, meaning, refuge of the people of the earth.[30]

The cheif interest of the reign Vikramaditya II lies in his wars with the Pallavas. He is said 'to have over run Kanchi three times – which brings us back to the Pallavas'. After his victory against Vikramaditya I, Parameshvaravaraman I continued to rule in Kanchi until his death which occurred about 700 A D, and was succeeded by his son Narasimhavarman II Rajasimha (700-728 A D). He constructed large and beautiful temples like the shore temple at Mamallapuram and the Kailasnath at Kanchipuram. It was also marked by literary activity, the great rhetorician Dandin spending of many years at his court. Rajasimha sent embassies to China and maritime trade flourished greatly in his time. His son mahendravarman III who took part in the construction of the Kailasnatha temple of the kanchi predeceased his father and many well have been the Pallava yuvaraja mentioned in west Ganga inscription of 713 A.D. [31]

The history of the early Pallavas has not yet been satisfactorily settled. The earliest documentation on the Pallavas is the three copper plates grants,[32] belonging to Skandavarman I and written in Prakrit [33], Skandavarman appears to have been the first great ruler of the early pallavas, though there are references to other early Pallavas who probably predecessors of Skandavarman.

In the reign of Simhavarman IV who ascended the throne in 436 A.D, the prestige of the Pallavas was restored. He recovered the territories lost to the Vishnukundin's in the north up to the mouth of the Krishna. The early

Pallava history from this period onwards is furnished by a dozen or so copper plate grants in Sanskrit. They are all dated in the regnal years of the kings.

With the accession of Nandivarman I (480-500 A.D), the decline of the early Pallava family was seen. The Kadambas had their aggressions and attacked even the headquarters of the Pallavas with the Pallavas taking retaliatory measures by expelling and invading Kadamba territories in Karnataka. In coastal Andhra the Vishnukundin's established their ascendency. The Pallava authority was confined to Tondaimandalam, father of Mahendravarman I 575 A.D, the Pallava revival began in the South.

Later Pallavas

The incursion of the Kalabhras and the confusion in the Tamil country was broken by the Pandyan kadungon and the Pallava Simhavishnu. The king Mahendravarman I after re-established the Pallava kingdom after defeating the Kalabhras, some of the most ornate monuments were constructed by Mahendravarman at Mamallapuram. The Pallava kingdom gained influence over the 6th C.A.D, defeating the king of Ceylon and mainland Tamilakkam. The Pallavas exercised control over their Southern neighbours of Cholas and Pandyas. But their history is marked by the continuous conflict eith the Badami Chalukyas.

Narasimhavarman I and parameshvravarman I were the kings who stand out with glorious achievements in both military and architectureal spheres. Thus the pallavas occupied a prominent place in the history of

South India for their conquest, expansion and immensed progress in the architectural field.

The Chalukyan Dynasty

In the sixth century A.D the Chalukyas brought about the political unification of the Deccan with Badami (Vatapi) as their capital. They held sway over the region for well over two centuries against formidable rivals like the Pallavas in the South and Harshavardhana in the North. At the same time the Chalukyas established semi-independent kingdoms ruled by their collaterals in Gujarat and Vengi. The eastern Chalukyas of the Vengi kingdom ruled continuously for four centuries and more, when their western Kinsmen and Badami lost their hold to the Rastrakutas, they remained independent with the help of the Chola. Towards the last quarter of the tenth century A.D the Chalukyas once again succeeded and coming back to power by setting aside the rule of the Rastrakutas, after remaining abscure for about than two centuries made Kalyana their capital and ruled over the Deccan for more than two centuries. The Chalukyas were not only shrewd in politics but also experts in warfare but also great builders and a dominant style of Indian architecture derives its name from these rulers. They were great patrons of language and literature religion and jurisprudence.

Origin

In epigraphis the name of this dynasty occurs differently like Chalke, Chulki, Chalikya, Chalukya, Chalukya etc. However Chalukya appears to havebeen the original form of the dynastic name which was later embellished into Chalukaya. Inscriptions are the main source of information about the Badami Chalukay history. Among them, the Badami cave inscriptions of Mangalesa 578 A D, Kappe Arabhatta record of 700 A D and Peduvnaduguru inscription of Pulakesi II, the Kanchi Kailasnath temple inscription and Pattadakal Virupoksha Temple inscription of Vikramaditya II (all in Kannada Language) provide more evidence of the Chalukya language. The Badami cliff inscription of Pulakesi I (543 A D), the Mahakuta pillar inscription of Mangalesha (595 A D) and the Aihole inscription of Pulakesi II (634 AD) are examples of important Sanskrit inscriptions written in all kannada script. The reign of the Chalukyas saw the arrival of kannada as the predominant language of inscriptions along with Sanskrit in areas of the Indian peninsula outside what is known as Tamilaham (Tamil country) several coins of the Badami Chalukyas with Kannada legends have been found. All this indicates that Kannada language flourished during this period. [34]

Periods in Chalukyan History

The Chalukya ruled over the Deccan plateau in India for over 600 years. During this period, they ruled as three closely related, but individual

dynasties. These are the Chalukyas of Badami, (also called Early Chalukyas who ruled between the 6th and 8th century) and the two sibling dynasties, the Chalukyas of Kalyani (also called western Chalukyas or Later Chalukyas) and the Chalukyas of Vengi (also called Eastern Chalukyas).[35]

Some of the important kings of Badami Chalukya are Pulakeshi I was the first ruler and founder of the dynasty of the Chalukyas of Badami. He chose Badami as his capital for its strategic considerations and built a strong fort on the hill near the town. Pulakeshi I performed Hiranyagarbhadana, he adopted the titles (Birudas) Satyasraya, Sri-prityivivallabha and Ranavikrama. He had three sons, Pugavarma, Kirtivarma and Mangalesha.

Keetiverma I (566 to 596 A D) the expansion of the Chalukya power was affected largely at the expense of the Kadambas. The Chalukya ruler was successful against the Nalas, who were ruling over the territory known as the Mauryas, who were ruling in Konkan with their capital at puri and the Alupas of Dakshina Kannada tract. Thus under Kirtivarman I the sway of the Chalukya was extended in all directions. He fought many victorios battles performed the Agnishtoma and Bahu Suvarna sacrifiees and earned the title of Puru-rana-parakrama (Puissant in many battles).

Mangalesa (596 To 610 C. A. D)

Pulakeshi II the eldest son of Kirtivarma I was too young to shoulder the responsibilities of the growing kingdom at the time of his father’s death. Hence mangalesh, the younger brother of Kirtivarma I tool upon himself the

burden of administration. He commenced his rule in 596 C. A. D. Mangalesh was valion and ambitions Buddharaja, the sone of Sankaraganga, in a decisive battle in about 601 C.A.D and gave a crusjing blow to the katachuri kingdom. Mangalesha continued his brother work with better results. Sivamiraja a viceroy of the Chalukyas governing the island of Revati turned hostile to the central authority . Pulakeshi II was in fact a ruler of great Versatility. Truly he was the refuge of the earth (Satyasraya) , the Supreme Lord (parameshvara)kings of kings (Maharajadi raja) destroyer of miced (Nigrihitadust Jannah), patron of learned (Parigrihita – Vidvat), a great devotee of lord Vishnu (parama-bhagavatah) and lord of the Deccan (Dakshina patha prithivya swami).

Pulakeshi II, whose precornation name was Ereya, commended control over the entire Deccan and is perhaps the most well – known emperor of the Badami dynasty.[36] Pulakeshi II extended the Chalukya Empire up to the northern extents of the Pallavas kingdom and halted the Southward march of Harsha by defeating him on the banks of the river Narmada. He then defeated the Vishnukundin's in the South eastern Deccan. [37]

The Badami Chalukya dynasty went intp a brief decline follwong the death of Pulakshi II due to internal fends when Badami was occupied by the Pallavas for a period of thirteen years. It recovered during the reign of Vikramaditya I (655 to 681 C A D) who succeeded in pushing the Pallavas out of Badami and restoring order to the empire. Vikramaditya I tool the title

Rajamalla ("sovereign of the Mallas or Pallavas") [38] Vikramadity has faced the Chola, Kerala and PPandya kings who brought treat to Chalukyas. He also fought with three generations of the Pallava kings viz., Narasimhavarman, Mahendravarman III and Parameshvaravarman I who came to the Pallava throne in succession. In his bid to occupy Kanchi, the chalukya ruler went as far as Malliyur to the west of the capital city Vikramaditya I ruled till 681 C A D.

After Vikramaditya I, Vijaditya ruled from 696-733 C A D. Has rule was for longer period in the history of the chalukyas. He to face the challenges against the Pallavas.

Next Vikramaditya II (733-745 C A D) began against the Pallava rules of Kanchi, Nandivarma II Pallavamdla. He underlook although three expeditions to Kanchi the first of which he led during his fathers time. The second expedition brought him completely success when he took possession of Kanchi. The disgrace of the Pallava occupation of Vatapi and the inscriptions left behind there by Narasimhavarma ranked in the mind of the Chalukya emperor and he paid his foe back in the same coin by putting upon inscription in Kannada, on of the pillars of the kailasanatha temple at Kanchi, states about his achievements.

Kirtvarma II (745-757 C.A.D): he was the last ruler of the early chalukyas his period witnessed the declined of his kingdom. Kirtivarama II could not face the Rastrakuta ruler Dantidurga. However, he continued to rule

757 C.A.D. thereafter he was defeated by Krishna I, the successor of Dantidurga with him came to an end the rule of the Chalukyas of Badami.

The Chalukyas Of Kalyana

It was in A D 973 that the Chalukya rule which had been set aside by the Rastrakutas was re-established by Taila II. The Chalukyas of Kalyana are also known as the essterns Chalukyas. A fragmentary inscription from Pattadakal in the charatters of about 8th century seems to refer to Taila I of the Chalukya dynasty.

Taila II (973-997 C. A. D)

Taila II the son of Vikramaditya IV and Bonthadevi was a subordinate of Krishna III. The later inscription calles him as Mahasomantadhipati Ahavamalla Tailaparasa and describes him as Chalukya Rama and Satyasraya – Kula – Tilaka, Taila II had obtained from Krishna III the district of Taradavadi – 1000. Till 977 A D Taila II had struggle hard to assest his empirical position and establish his rule firmly. Two epigraphs from the Bellary district dated about 976 C A D give full regal titles to Taila II and indicate the complete subordination of the Nolamba – Pallavas to the Chalukya monarch. Taila II came to be accepted as their overlord by the Silaharas of north Konkan, and the Seunas of Devagiri. The Chalukya commonder Barapa conquered the territory of Lata. Thus Taila become the master of the territory which had formed the Rastrakuta kingdom. Taila II won a victory over Mulnaraja of Gujarat. Taila II who ruled for a period of twenty

four years from 973 to 997 C A D. He was able to receive and also stabilize the Chalukya rule. He justifiably bore the title Ahavamalla.

Satyasraya (997 to 1008 C.A.D)

He was the eldest son of Taila II. He had titles like Ahavamalla, A Kalavarsha, Sahasa-Bheema and Irivabadanga. He assisted his father in subduing the Cholas and Paramaras. The Chola were the arch enemies of the Chalukyas, Chola king Rajaraja I defeated Satyasraya in a pitched battle and out of the booty gained in the war the temple in Tanjore was enriched is apparently a tall claim made by the Chola adversaries Rajaraja I first killed the younger brother of Satyasraya called Dasavarma. Satyasraya had to content with the silahara, Aparajita in the west and mularaja in the north.

Vikramaditya V (1008 – 1015 AD)

He was the nephew of Satyasraya and the son of Dasavarma succeeded to the chalukya throne. The Chola invasion was only the notable event of his reign. Rajendra Chola marched against him but could not achieve anything.

Ayyana (1014-1015 C.A.D): He probably ruled for a couple of months in the beginning of the year 1015 AD.

Jayasimha II (1015-1044 C.A.D)

He succeeded to the throne in 1015 C.A.D. A confederacy was formed against Jayasimha. He has to face Bhoja the Paramaras king, Gongeyadeva, the Kalachuri king and Rajendra, the Chola ruler. These three rulers invaded the Chalukya empire and terrible battle was fought on the banks of Godaveri when Jayasimha II was successful in putting to fight the confederacy of the Malvas, In 1024 AD Jayasimha re-captured Konkan from Bhoja. Jayasimha's really formidable enemy was Chola Rajendra, who was identifying himself with the affairs of Vengi. The Chola records apparently exaggerate when they decide that the chola king conquered Rattapadi from Jayasimha II. Jayasimha II bore title Jagadekamalla and Mallikkamoda.

Somesvara I (1044 – 1068 C.A.D)

Someshvara I, the eldest son of Jayasimha II succeeded to the throne assumed title such as Ahavamalla and Trailokyamalla. Bilhana says Somesvara I capatil was Kalyana. During the period of his rule South India become a battle field as the conflict between the Chalukyas and Cholas become intense over the Tunga Bhadra doab and Vengi. The Chola ruler Rajendra I who died in 1024 A.D. Moreover Somesvara I could not pay attention on the Southern frontiers against the Chola as he was pre-occupied in the north which enable the Cholas to gain initial victories.

The battle of Koppam was fought in 1054 AD, Rajendra attacked the fort of Kummta in Bellary district a strong hold of the Hoysalas. In the north the Paramara king had been the hereditary enemies of the Chalukyas.

Somesvara I had also to fight against Karna the Kalachri ruler. During his period the Hoysalas also accepted his suzernity and entered into a matrimonial alliance with the Chalukya rulers.

Somesvara II (1068 – 1076 A.D)

Bhuvanaikamalla Somesvara II succeeded his father on 11th April 1068 C.A.D. Somesvara II attacked Virarajendra the Chola ruler. During his period he strengthen his Southern frontier Vikramaditya VI was incharge of Gangavadi region, while jasimha IV the governor of the Nolamba- Sindvadi, Bilhana says that Vikramaditya defeated the army of Cholas, jayakesi I, the kadamba Cheif of Goa, Vikramaditya VI want to attack Virarajendra, but the Chola king sued for peace by maintaining matrimonial alliance.

Vikramaditya VI (1077-112 C.A.D)

His era is called as Chalukya Vikrama era. His coronation tool place in 1077 A D. His reign was full of peace. His contemporaries were the Chola rulers. Bilhana says his period witnessed peace and prosperity. Vikramaditya's brother Jayasimha IV was made the governor of Tardavadi division. Kulottunga I, the Chola ruler was bitter enemy of the Chalukyas. Vikramaditya VI faces the Paramara ruler Udayadity and the malva ruler by capturing the city called Dhara. He succeeded up of till Narmada. During his last years of rule Vikramaditya VI was required to put down some fendation is in the sent west of his empire. He fought against Kulotunga. He also attacked

Chakrakanta, the famous fort of Bastar in Madhayapradesh, with the coming of Bellala I to power the relations between the Chalukyas and Hoysalas came to be strained Vikramaditya VI died in 1127 AD.

Somesvara III (1127 – 1139 C.A.D)

The death of Vikramadity VI gave rise to Vikrama Chola to rise in his ambition. Somesvara got title as Bhulokamalla and Sarvajna Chakravati, the Southern half of Vengi region went to the Cholas after the death of Vikramaditya VI. The Hoysala ruler Vishnuvardhana was humble to Vikramaditya VI, but later the situations changed Somesvara III captured the capital of Pandyas called Uchchangi. Someshvara III the author of Manasollasa or Abhilashitartha Chintamani. So he earned the name as Saravajna Chakravarthi.

Jagadekamalla II (1139-1149 C A.D)

Jagadekamalla II is known as Jagadekamalla and he is bestowed with the title Pratapa-Chakravati. During Somesvara III a great portion of Vengi was last. The Kakatiya fendatory prola II has become powerful and at the same time. The Kadambas of Goa declared themselves independent. The Chalukyan lost the territories of Konkan and Palasige. The death of Somesvara III pavedway for further rise of Vishnuvardhana. In 1139 A D Vishnuvardhana captured Hangal and Bankapura. But the generals of Chalukya Dandadayaka, Barmadeva his brother Dandanayaka Madhava and

others defeated Vishnuvardhana in a fierce battle and recovered these areas from the Hoysala Chieftian. The Chalukya Jagadekamalla II was thus able to restore the prestige of the family.

Taila III (1149-1162 C.A.D)

In 1149 A D jagadekamalla II was succeeded by his younger brother Tailapa III known more popularly by the title Trailokyamalla. During Taila II, the Hoyasalas, Kakatiyas and Seuvnas were waiting to become independent. Kalachuri Bijiala’s ambition to become independent of the Chalukya authority and establish his own rule Bijiala assumed all the empirical title of the Chalukyas by forcebale usurpation.

Somesvara IV (1183-1198 C.A.D)

Somesvara IV had sought shelter in the regions of royal fendatories like the Nidugal Cholas, the pandyas of Uchchangi and the Santaras. By about 1175 AD. The kalachuri generals were highly disappointed and some of them withdraw their support and also made strenuous efforts to restore the Chalukyaan power. During Somesvara IV the sovereignity was limited to the Southern parts of the kingdom. The Seunas began to acquire territories, Kalayana was captured by Chalukya general Dandanayaka Brahma himself. The last known date of Somesvar IV is 1198 A.D. with him the Chalukyas made an exit from the stage of history.

The Chalukyan of Vengi (the Eastern Chalukyas)

When Vijaditya I died afted a rule of eighteen or nineteen years about 764 AD his son Vihnuvardhana IV become king and ruled the Vengi country for 36 years. Soon after 779 A.D there was a struggle for the Rastrakuta throne between Govinda II and his younger brother Dhruva, in which the former rulers of Malava, Kanchi, Gangavadi and Vengi all of whom had been subdued by the Rastakutas. An epigraph of 802 A.D [39] supported by the Radhanpur grants of 808 A.D (40) says that at half a word from the month of Dhruvas letter bearer, the king of vengi, wherever he was constantly performed his service without intermission, by his own wish and built for him an outer wall, lofty as the sky, of marvellous splendour, with the constellations around its real like a garland of pearls.

Vishnuvardhana IV had several sons viz, Vijayaditya II, Bhima – Salukki (i.e., Bhima – Chalukya) and Nriparudra. About 799 A.D, Vijaditiya II became king and assumed the titles Narendramrigaraja, Chalukyarjuna and Tribhuvanankusa. “Fleet” (41) says Vijayaditya II ruled for 48 years and died about 847 A.D Vijayaditya II adopted the titles Paramabhattakara Maharajadhiraja and Paramesvara. His brother Bhima – Salukki deserted him and joined the Rashtrakutas. The king was utterly defeated by the Rastrakutas under Govinda III and their allies the Gangas and Bhima – Salukki was raised to the throne of Vengi. But Vijaditya II continued the

struggle and when after the death of Govinda III 814 A D his minor son Amoghavarsha I ascended the Rastrakutas throne and was facing a rebellion of his officials and fendatories the Chalukyan king succeeded in recovering his throne by over throwing Bhima-Salukki in spite of the assistance the latter received from the Rastrakutas and Gangas.

The eastern Chalukya army now over a considerable portions of the Rastrakuta empire and reached the city of Stambha (modern Cambay in Gujarat) [42]. Vijayaditiya is said to have fought battle in a continuous struggle of 12 years with the Rastrakutas and Gangas, to have destroyed the Dakshina Ganga (the Southern Gangas) and to have taken possession of Vengi-mandala by extirpating his younger brother Bhima-salukki.

The records of the Rastrakuta of Navsari [43] grant of India III admit that in the early part of the reign of Amoghavarsha I the along of the Rastrakuta was drowned in the ocean of the Chalukyas who have destroyed the city of stambha. But the success of eastern.Chalukyas was short lived, Amoghavarsh I received help from Karkka, the Rastrakuta viceroy of Gujarat, is said to have raised the glory of his kingdom. It is said that Amoghavarsha I has destroyed a large host of the Chalukyas at the battle field of Vingavalli.

The next king of Vengi was Vijayadityas son Vishnuvardhana V, also called Kali-Vishnuvardhana (Kali – Bittarasa), Sarvalokasraya and Vishamasiddhi. He ruled for twenty months and died about 848 A.D. Next Vijayaditya III, like his grandfather was bent upon Digvijaya in which he was

assisted by his able minister Vinayadisarman to conquer the city of Nellura (Nellore), from the Pallavas of Kanchi. He is further credited with a victory over the Pandyas. He defeated the Gangas in the west. Next in the North the Eastern Chalukya king defeated the combined force of the Rastrakuta king Sankila Vijayaditya III. Overran the Rastrakuta Empire and burnt Achalapura (Modern Ellichpur in Berar). He is further said to have burnt the city of Chakrakuta in the old Bastar state, captured the elephants of the king of Kosala.

"Fleet" Suggested that Chalukya-Bhima I ascended the throne in 888 A.D according to the Attili inscriptions. [44] His coronation took place in 892 A.D. he had many titles to his credit. He ruled for 30 years and died about 922 A.D. Chalukya Bhima I had two sons viz, Vijayaditya IV and Vikramaditya of whom the former succeeded him about 922 A.D. Vijayaditya IV defeated the Rastrakuta forces. Vijaya IV has two sons viz, Amana I, alias Vishnuvardhana and Chalukya Bhima II. Bhima II ruled for 12 years (935-46 A.D) after extripated Yaddhamalla and other claimants to the throne, Chalukya Bhima II was also known as Bhima, Raja Bhima and Vishnuvardhana. Rajamahendri became the second capital of the later Eastern Chalukyas with a Chalukya king names Vijayadity Mahendra. [45]

The next king was Amma II who was known both as Vijayaditya and Rajamahendra. He is described as lord of Vengi and Kalinga. The king granted a village in favour of the Jain temple of Sarvalokasraya Jinavallabha.

He is also known to have made gifts to the Jain temples at Vijayavatika (Bezwada). After Amma II had ruled for eleven years, he was driven out of the Vengi country by Badapa son of king Yuddhamalla. Badapa became the king Karna or Krishna III. So Amma II fought against Krishna III, shortly Amma III regained his kingdom from the Rastrakutas. [46]

The Kadamba Dynasty

With the rise of the Kadamba's to power, Karnataka entered into bright period of history. They played a prominent part from fourth C.A.D to the middle of sixth century A.D. they were inheritors of power and glory of the Shatavahanas. When the Kadamba's came to power their contemporaries and Gangas in the South and the Vakatakas in the north were on friendly terms with them. The antiquity of Banavasi also called Vaijayanti, it is mentioned as Vanavasa in the Mahabharata. In the second C.A.D Vaijayanti was called by the Greeks as Byzantion, mentioned by Ptolemy in his work Geography. The Prakrit inscription of the third and fourth centuries A.D [47] at Nagarjunakonda revels that piligrims from Vanavasa, visited the Buddhist monasteries built by the Ikshavaku rulers there. The Talagunda Inscription of the Santivarma and the Gudnapur lithic record of Ravivarma bring out the historical details of the beginning of the Kadambas. The Kadambas belong to a family of Brahmin's of the Manavyagotra in the linage of Hariti. The early member of this family was Virasarma who was a Brahmin. The Talagunda

inscription says that Virasarma was guru of Mayuarasarma who accompanied him to Kanchi for higher studies where Mayurasarma was enraged by the treatment meted out to him by the mounted guard and decided to discontinue studies in preference to arms.

Mayuravarma (325-345 C.A.D) the son of Bandhusena, he subdved the Pallavas and Brihad-Bana and other kings. Mayuravarma's Chandhravalli inscription names the kings he defeated those are Traikutakas, Abhiras, Pallavas, Pariyatrika, Sakasthrana Mokari, Punnata and Sayindakas. [48]

Kangavarma, the son and successor of Mayuravarma. He was defeated by Vakataka ruler. Later he was succeeded by his son Bhagiratha, he retrieved the losses his family had suffered in the earlier reign and restored the kingdom. He maintain matrimonial alliance with the Guptas to secure peace in the kingdom.

Kakusthavarma (405-430 A.D) was a powerful ruler and even the kings of Gupta dynasty of Northern India cultivated martial relationships with his family, giving a fair indication of the sovereign nature of their kingdom. He fought against the Pallavas in the South and maintained friendly relations with the Gupta. He gave his daughters to Vakataka kings in order to secure peace and harmony in his kingdom. Later Kakusthavarma was succeeded by Shantivarma (430-455 A.D) who has to face the Pallavas, who were his rivals [49].

The Kadambas were contemporarise of the western Ganga Dynasty and together they formed the earliest native kingdoms to rule the land with absolute autonomy. Mrigesavarma (455-480 C.A.D) who pursued a policy of territorial expansion came in conflict with the Gangas and Pallavas. During his period Halsi in Khanapur taluka of the Belgaum district, become a second capital of the Kadamba dominions. Mrigesavarma was a wise administer. He took interest in the welfare of his subjects. His literary achievements were remarkable and his knowledge of various sciences was extensive.

Historians are divided on the issue of the caste of the Kadamba family, whether the founders of the kingdom belonged to the Brahmin caste as claimed by the Talagunda inscription or were of tribal origin. A claim has been made that the Kadambas were none other than a tribe called the Kadambu, who were in conflict with the Chera kingdom (of Modern Tamil Nadu, Kerala region). The 'Kadambu's' find mention in the Tamil Sangam literature as totemic worshipper of the kadambu tree and the Hindu God Subramanya, while some historians says that they being of Brahmin descent made Mayuarasharma's ancestors natives of Northern India. Being native Kannadigas, the Kadambas promptly gave administrative and political importance to their language Kannada after coming to power. The Naga descent of the Kadambas has been stated in early inscriptions of king Krishna Varma I too, which confirms the family was from present day Karnataka. [50].

Inscriptions in Sanskrit and Kannada are the main source of the Kadamba history. The Talagunda, Gundanur, Chandhravalli, Halasi and Halmidi inscription are some of the important inscriptions that thrown light on this ancient ruling family of Karnataka [51]. The Kadambas minted coins with Nagari, Kannada and Grantha legends which provide additional numismatic evidence of their history [52]. Several early Kadamba dynasty coins bearing the Kannada inscription Vira and Skandha was found in Satara collect orate [53]. A gold coin of king Bhagiratha bearing the old Kannada legends Sri and Bhagi also exists [54]. Recent discovery of 5th century Kadamba copper coin in Banavasi with Kannada script inscription Srimanaragi on it proves the usage of Kannada at the administrative level [55].

During the times of Ravivarma also the Pallava continued their conflict, but Ravivarma with the help of Vishnuvarma defeated and killed Chandadandesa, who probably belong to a minor family of the Pallavas. During this period Uchchangi in Bellary district also became yet another capital beside as Halasi. Harivarma, son of Ravivarma was the last of the Kadamba king belonging to Santivarma's line. Harivarma defeated by Krishna Varma II, Triparvata ruler he also captured his capital Banavasi.

Krishnavarma I (430-460 C.A.D) ruled about 430-460 A.D. his reign was marked by two events. One was the conquest of the Nagas and the other was the fight with the Pallavas. The Nagas seems to have been the Sendraka feudatories the Pallava chief with whom Krishnavarma I fought was

Nanakkasa Pallava. Krishnavarma performed the horse sacrifice which indicated his political status [56].

Later Vishnuvarma (460-490 C.A.D) and Simhavarma (490-516 C.A.D), succeed to the throne after Krishnavarma I death. In about 516 A.D, Krishnavarma II succeeded his father Simhavarma. The two collateral Kadamba families were united again during this period when Krishnavarma defeated Harivarma his contemporary of the main line and established in the latter's capital, Banavasi. Thus Krishnavarma become the sole master of the Kadamba territories. The political situation in the kingdom became fluid which provided an opportunity to the ambitious Chalukya prince Pulakeshi I, he defeated Krishnavarma II and established himself as an independent ruler. He built a fort at Badami, also known Vatapi. Thus Kadamba dynasty was reduced to a feudatory status by the Chalukyas.

The Kadambas though they ruled in ancient Karnataka their influence was high with the South Indian dynasties, like the Pallava and the Chalukyas of Badami. The Kadambas were the contemporary rulers of the Gangas. Here the Kadamba political history has been studied to known how they faced the opposition from the Southern dynasty and how they faced the political situation beyond their reach and sustained the growth.

The Ganga Dynasty

The Gangas (350-1050 A D) rose to power almost at the same time when the Kadambas gained ascendency and ruled over the Southern parts of the Karnataka. They did not rule independent rulers for long but, certainly they acted as powerful feudatories of the imperial dynasties of Karnataka. In a record of tenth century A.D, state that the fore fathers of this family were ruling in the north, first from Ayodha and then from Ahichchatrapura. Later two princes of that family Dadiga and Madhava, migrated to Gangaperur in the South and the latter established a kingdom there with Nandigiri as the stronghold and Kuvalala (Kolar) as the capital, Gangaperur referred to here is now a village of the same name in Cuddapah district of Andhra Pradesh. The western Ganga dynasty was an important ruling dynasty of ancient Karnataka in India. They are known as western Gangas to distinguish them from the Eastern Gangas who in later centuries ruled over modern Orissa. The general belief in the western Gangas began their rule during a time when multiple native clans asserted their freedom due to the weakening of their overlords, the Pallavas Empire in South India a Geo-political event sometimes attributed to the Southern conquest of Samudra Gupta. The western Ganga sovereignity lasted from about 350-550 A.D. initially a ruling from Kolar and later moving their capital to Talakadu on the banks of Kaveri river in modern Mysore district [57].

After the rise of imperial Chalukya of Badami, the Gangas accepted Chalukya over lordship and fought for the cause of their overlords against the Pallavas of Kanchi. The Chalukyas wer defeated by the Rastrakutas of Manyaketa in 753 A.D as the dominant power in the Deccan. After a struggle for automony, the Western Gangas finally accepted Rastrakutas overlordship and successfully fought alongside then against their foes, the Chola dynasty of Tanjavur. In the late tenth century, north of Tungabhadra, the Rastrakutas were replaced by the emerging Western Chalukya Empire and the Chola dynasty saw renewed power South of the Kaveri river. The defeat of the Western Gangas by Cholas ground 1000 resulted in the end of the Ganga influences over the region [58].

Though territorially a small kingdom, the western Ganga contribution to the polity, culture and literature of the modern South Karnataka region is considered important. The western Ganga kings showed benevolent tolerance to all faiths but are most famous for their patronage towards Jainism resulting in the construction of monuments in places such as Shravanabelagola and Kambadahalli. The king of this dynasty encouraged the fine arts due to which literature in Kannada and Sanskrit flourished. Chavundaraya Purana of 978 A D is an important work in Kannada prose. Many classics were written on various subjects ranging from religion to Elephant management [59].

Multiple theories have been regarding the ancestry of the founders of the weastern Ganga (prior to the fourth century A.D) while a number of Jaina inscriptions point to a northern origin [60], some theories based on assumptions suggest a Southern origin. The other set of historians has put forth their opinion whether the early members of the clan were natives of the Southern districts of modern Karnataka [61], the Kongu region in Modern Tamil Nadu or of the Southern districts of Modern Andhra Pradesh. Some facts like the mention of the Kongani pattern only from the 6th century inscriptions, after a conquest, rule out their Kongu Nadu origin, these regions encompass on area of the Southern Deccan where the three modern states merge geographically. It is theorised that the Gangas may have taken advantage of the confusion caused by the invasion of Southern India by the northern king Samudragupta prior to 350 A.D and carried out a kingdom for themselves. Their capital was called Gangavadi and included regions of the modern districts of Mysore, Hassan, Chamarajnagar, Tumkur, Kolar, Mandya and Bangalore in Karnataka state [62]. At times, they also controlled some areas in modern Tamil Nadu (Kongu region starting from the sixth century rule of king Avinita) and Andhra Pradesh (Anantapur region starting from middle of 5th century 200 A.D. the founding king of the dynasty was Konganivarman Madhava who made Kolar his capital round 350 A.D and ruled about twenty years.

By the time of Harivarman in 390 A.D the Gangas had consolidated their kingdom with Talakad as their capital. Their move from the early capital Kolar may have been strategic one with the intention of containing the growing Kadamba power. By 430 A.D, they had consolidated their eastern territories comprising modern Bangalore, Kolar and Tumkur districts and by 470 A D, they had gained control over Kongu region in modern Tamil Nadu, sendraka (modern Chikkamangaluru and Belur), Punnata and Pannada regions (comprising modern Heggadedevanakote and Nanjanagudu) in modern Karnataka [63]. In 529 A.D, king Durvinta ascended the throne after waging a war with his younger brother who was favoured by his father, king Avinita. Some accounts suggest that in this power struggle, the Pallavas of Kanchi supported Avinita choice of their and the Badami Chalukya king Vijayaditya supported his father in law, Durvinita. From the inscriptions it is known that these battles were fought in Tondaimandalam and Kongu regions (Northern Tamil Nadu) prompting historians to suggest that Durvinita fought the Pallavas successfully [64]. Durvinita the most successful of the Gangas was well versed in arts, music, dance, and Ayurveda and taming wild Elephants.

Politically, the Gangas were feudatories and closed allies who also shared matrimonial relations with the Chalukyas, this is attested by the inscriptions which describe their joint campaigns against their arch enemy, the Pallavas of Kanchi. From the year 725 A.D onwards the Gangavadi territories came to be called as the Gangavadi 96000 (Shannavati Sahasra

Vishaya) comprising the eastern and western provinces of Modern South Karnataka [65]. King Sri Purusha fought the Pallava king Nandivarman pallavamalla successfully, bringing Penkulikottal in the north Arcot under the control temporarily for which he earned title Permanadi [66]. A contest with the Pandyas of Madhurai over control of Kongu region ended in a Ganga defeated, but a matrimonial alliances between Ganga princess and Rajasimha Pandyas son brought peace helping the Gangas retain control over the contested region.

In 753 A.D, when the Rastrakutas replaced the Badami Chalukyas as the dominant force in the Deccan, the Gangas offered stiff resistance for about a century. King Shivamara II is mostly known for his wars with the Rastrakuta Dhruva Dharavarsha, his subsequent defeat and imprisonment, his release from prison and eventually his death on the battle field. The Ganga resistance continued through the region of Rastrakuta Govinda III and by 819 A.D. A Ganga resuragence gained them partial control over Gangavadi under king Rachamalla, seeing the futility of waging war with the western Ganga, Rastrakuta, and Amoghavarsha I gave his daughter in marriage to Ganga prince Butuga I, son of King Ereganga Neetimarga. The Gangas were the staunch allies of the Rastrakutas. After a uneventful period, Butuga II ascended the tkuthrone in 938 A.D with the help of Rastrakuta Amoghavarsha III, he helped the Rastrakutas to win victories in Tamilakam in the battle of Takkulam against the Chola dynasty), with this victory, the

Rastrkutas took control of modern northern Tamil Nadu. In return for their Valour, the Gangas were awarded extensive territories in the Tungabhadra river valley. King Marasimha II who came to power in 963 A.D aided the Rastrakutas in victories against the Gujara Pratihara king Lalla and the Paramara [67]. Kings of Malwa in central India Chavundaraya, a minister in the western Ganga court was a valiant commander, able administer and an accomplished poet in Kannada and Sanskrit. He served king Marasimha II and his successors ably and helped king Rachamalla IV; suppress a civil war in 975 A.D. towards the end of the 10th century the Rastrakutas had been supplanted by the western Chalukya empire in Manyakheta. In the South, the Chola dynasty who were seeing a resurgence of power under Rajaraja Chola I conquered Gangavadi around the year 1000, bringing the western Ganga dynasty to an end thereafter, large areas of South Karnataka region came under Chola control for about a century.

The Gangas through the feudatory rulers were well established in their power. They forced the Pallavas, the Badami Chalukyas and even the Cholas in the South fought with the Gangas. The Ganga rulers were all-rounder without any doubt; in the history of Karnataka they have left remarkable foot prints in various fields.

The Sangamas played a very important role in the history of South India and their literary works are the important achievements which help us to know the history and the conditions during the Pandyas, Cholas and Cheras.

Next the Shatavahanas played a vital role inthe Deccan and the great rulers contributed towards the expansion of the kingdom. The Pallavas and the Later Pallava rulers made enormous contribution to enrich their kingdom. The Pallava rulers are known for their valour and political stability and their continuous conflict with the early Chalukyas. And the Pallavas rave left a remarkable foot print in the field of art and architecture. The early Chalukyan or the Badami Chalukyas also established their rule in the South and brought political unification in the South. They sway was over Harshavardhana in the north and Pallavas in the South. The western Chalikyas and Eastern Chalukyas also established their political stability over the Rastrakutas, Cholas and the Pandyas. Overall it is interesting to know these dynasties have made extreme growth and reached the zenith of success. The Kadambas and Gangas they ruled in ancient Karnataka, but their's way political control was over the Southern dynasties viz., Pallavas, Chalukyas of Badami, Cholas, Rastrakutas and the many feudatories of the imperial dynasties of Karnataka so here the usage was felt to study about the Kadamba and the Gangas and their comtemporary rulers and their relations and conquest with the South Indian dynasties.

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CHAPTER III

ORIGIN AND GROWTH OF CASTE SYSTEM IN INDIA

“G.S. Ghurye’s” caste and race in India is an important work to understand the base and the root of the caste system in India. His work gives us a vivid picture about the caste system existing in India. He also says that caste were groups with a well developed life of their own, the membership where of, unlike that of voluntary associations and of classes was determined not by selection but by birth. He also states about the castes existing in the Southern India. He further states the <u>Brahmin’s</u> residing in Madras, says that these Brahmins out look is totally different and they do not include in the worship of <u>Grama Devata</u>, the village God’s to which the oboriginal population almost exclusively bows down. The <u>Brahmins</u> did not permit widow marriage nor tolerate concubinage as a caste practice. In Southern India the artisan castes has maintained a struggle for a higher place in the social scale then that allowed to them by Brahminical authority.

“John Fryer”, who payed a visit to India, says in the linguistic divisions of India, there are as many as two hundred castes which can be grouped in classes whose gradation is largely acknowledge by all. The Brahmins degraded the lower caste thinking themselves as superior at one end.

"Martin" says in Bihar the Shudras were divided into four classes. "E.A. Blunt" says, there is no relation between a castes social position and the severity of its cooking taboo, as many as thirty six out of seventy six castes of Uttar Pradesh take 'Kachcha' cooked food from only their own members and none others. Pakka food can be ordinarily taken not only from ones own or many higher castes, but also from the confections, classes, the Myras and Halwai's. Even wells are polluted if a low caste man draws water from them, but a great deal depends on the character of the vessel used and of the well from which water is drawn. In the Maratha country the shadow of an untouchable is sufficient if it falls on a member of a higher caste to pollute him. In Malabar region certain castes have always have to keep a stated distance between themselves and the Brahmin and other higher castes so as not to defile the latter. Thus the Shanar, Toddy, Tapper of Tamil Nadu, contaminates a Brahmin if he approaches the latter within twenty – four paces. Among the people of Kerala a Nayar may approach a Nambudiri, Brahmin but must not touch him, while a Tiyan must keep himself at the distance of thirty six from the Brahmin. Even some times the Brahmin doctor, when feeling the pulse of shudra, first wraps up the patients wrist with a small piece of silk so that he may not be defiled by touching his skin. In the region of Telugu and Kanarese the low caste people were kept at the out skirts of the village or city. In the Tamil and Malayalam region the Brahmin's allowtted the pace for the Shudras.

In Karnataka also the Brahmin's reside at high locality. But where as the shudras reside at the out skirts places given by the Brahmins. Even the depressed clases like the Mang, Mahar etc, are forced to live on the out skirts of the village. However in the Dravidian South, the every land of the supreme dominance of the Brahmins, the Brahmin was restricted in his rights of access to any part of the village. In Gujarat the depressed castes used to wear a horn as their distinguishing mark. The shudras and Izhavas, toddy – teppers story on the eastern and western coasts were not allowed to build houses above one strong in hight. Even incase of women for her identity as shudra women, she has to keep the upper part of the bodies quite bare.

The Shudras were denied of gaining education and knowledge. They do not have any right to read the sacred literature, they were not allowed to enter the temples and the childrens of shudras were not allowed to get into the educational institutions to gain basic knowledge. Even the burial place were separate for the shudras, "Russell", observes the real unit of the system and the basis of the unit of the Indian system and the basis of the fabric of Indian society in this endogamous group or sub-caste.[1]

G.S. Ghurye also says about caste has evolved and occupied its position in society and community. To give a proper picture about the caste system, he break up the history of India into four periods. First the Vedic period ending about 600 B.C and comprising the literary data of the Vedic Samhitas and the Brahmanaas, second, the post Vedic period. In this period

we have three types of literature which shed light on these subjects. Buddhist literature also gives glimpse of the institutions and some aspects of caste. The third period may be styled as Dharmasastra and ends with the tenth or eleventh century A.D. Manu, Yajnavalka and Vishnu are the chief exponents of the social ideals of this age. The fourth period called the modern period and it brings us down to the beginning of the nineteenth century. The customs and beliefs of contemporary Hindus are those that were mostly fixed and classified by the writers of this period.

In Rig Veda, the earliest work of the first period three classes of society are very frequently mentioned, the Brahmanaa, Kshatriya, and Vaishya. The word 'Caste' is first mentioned in Purusha Sukta and four order of the society has been mentioned. Even the Taittiriya Samhita, ascribes the origins of the four classes. The Shatapatha Brahmanaa lays down different sizes of the funeral mounda for the four classes. In the Rigveda the word "Varna" is never applied to anyone of these classes. But the Shatapatha classes. But the Shatapatha Brahmana describes the four classes as the four Varnas. According to Shatapatha Brahmana the Brahmanai's are regarded themselves as the spreaders of Civilization.

The second order in the society were Kshatriya in the Rigveda they were known as Rajanya. They were good archer and good chariot fighter, some shatriyas were well versed in the literature and some have acted as priests also for example Janaka, Pravahana, Jaivali Ajatashatru and

Ashvapali Kaikeya are some of the conspicuous names of philosopher kings. The third order in society namely the Vaishya, the Aitareya Brahmana describes him as tributary to another and to be lived upon by another and to be supported at will. As per as Taittiriya Samhita, the greatest ambition of a Vaishya was to be the Gramani or the village headman. The name of the fourth class appears only once in Rig Veda. The Shudra is described as the servant of another. The Shatapatha Brahmana goes to the length of decreasing the Shudra is untruth itself. In the Rigveda the distinction is made between the Arya and the Shudra. The reference to the Chandalas in the Yajurveda clearly show them to be degraded people. The Paulkasas and Chandalas are referred to as a described race of men in the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad. In the Vedic period, the Dasa was described as the black race. The Mahabharata says that the shudra can have no absolute property, because his wealth can be appropriated by his master at will. "Apastamba" opines that the Shudra is not entitled to the rite of initiation, the study of the Vedas and the kindling of the sacred fire. A Shudra can be abused by a Brahmin without entailing any punishment.

Gauthama observes, men of the several castes and orders who always lire according to their duty enjoy after death the rewards of their works and by virtue of a remnant of their merit, they are born again in excellent countries, castes and families endowed with beauty, long life, learning in the Vedas, virtuous conduct, wealth happiness and wisdom.

"R.H. Tawney", observes the facts of class status and inequality were rationalized in the middle ages by a functioned theory of society Patanjali, the great grammarian wrote, the physical Characteristics of a Brahmin were fair skin and tawny hair. Patanjali declares them to be the utrinsic traits marketing a Brahmin and black colour of the skin that of a non-Brahmin.

P.C. Mahalanobis concludes his survey of the Uttar Pradesh, castes thus, the Brahmins occupy the highest social position in Hindu society, but in the case of low caste is that the social status and physical size of Shudra varies a lot from the Brahmin, he is short, dark skinned and physically not so attractive for example the castes of Uttarpradesh i.e., Bhatu, Habru and Dom [2]. He also comprises the physical features of the Bihar caste with the Punjabies. Over all we can say that G.S. Ghurye has done great justice in helping us know castes, tribes, sub castes and other social groups. He also referes about their life style, dignity, position and status in the society, their occupation and service towards the society and community. He also refers about their culture, norms, customs, traditions which were followed in the society.

The Caste System in India is a system of social stratification,[3] social restriction and a basis for affirmative action [4] in India. Historically, the caste system in India defined communities into thousands of endogamous hereditary groups called Jatis.[5]

The Jatis were grouped by the Brahminical texts under the four well known caste categories, (the varnas): viz Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas, and Shudras.[6] Certain people were excluded altogether, ostracized by all other castes and treated as untouchables.[7]

Although identified with Hinduism, caste systems have been also observed among other religions in the Indian subcontinent, including some groups of Muslims, Buddhists and Christians.[8] The latter similar to the caste system reported in the Igbo-Osu Christian community in Africa.[9]

Caste is commonly thought of as an ancient fact of Hindu life, but various contemporary scholars have argued that the caste system was constructed by the British colonial regime.[10] Caste is neither unique to Hindu religion nor to India, caste systems have been observed in other parts of the world, for example, in Muslim community of Yemen, Christian colonies of Spain, and Buddhist community of Japan.[11]

The Indian government officially recognizes historically discriminated lowest castes of India such as Shudras and Untouchables as Scheduled Castes.[12] These Schedules Castes are sometimes referred to as Dalit in contemporary literature. In 2001, the proportion of Dalit population was 16.2 percent of India's total population.[13]

Since 1950, India has enacted and implemented many laws and social initiatives to protect and improve the socio-economic conditions of its Dalit population.[14] By 1995, of all jobs in India, 17.2 percent of the jobs were held

by Dalits, greater than their proportion in Indian population.[15] Of the highest paying, senior most jobs in government agencies and government controlled enterprises, over 10 percent of all highest paying jobs were held by members of the Dalit community, a tenfold increase in 40 years. In 1997, India democratically elected K.R. Narayanan, a Dalit, as the nation's President.[16] In last 15 years, Indians born in historically discriminated minority castes have been elected to its highest judicial and political offices.[17] The quality of life of Dalit population in India, in 2001, in terms of metrics such as access to health care, life expectancy, education attainability, access to drinking water, housing, etc. was statistically similar to overall population of modern India.[18]

A 2003 report claims inter-caste marriage is on the rise in urban India. Indian societal relationships are changing because of female literacy and education, women at work, urbanization, need for two-income families, and influences from the media.[19]

India's overall economic growth has produced the fastest and more significant socio-economic changes to the historical injustice to its minorities. Legal and social program initiatives are no longer India's primary constraint in further advancement of India's historically discriminated sections of society and the poor. Further advancement are likely to come from improvements in the supply of quality schools in rural and urban India, along with India's economic growth.[20]

The Possible Genetic Origin of Caste System

The origins of the Jati caste system are lost in history and folklore. Many scholars believe that the modern Jatis represent ancient tribal and occupational affiliations that have evolved and specialised over time. A question had remained whether or not castes are genetically distinct, and whether genetic differences between groups might partly explain their origin. These genetic studies have so far failed to achieve a consensus, possibly because of the developing nature of genotyping science and technologies.[21]

A 1995 study by Joanna L. Mountain et al. of Stanford University concluded that there was "no clear separation into three genetically distinct groups along caste lines", although "an inferred tree revealed some clustering according to caste affiliation".[22]

A 2001 genetic study, led by Michael Bamshad of University of Utah, found that the genetic affinity of Indians to Europeans is proportionate to caste rank, the upper castes being most similar to Europeans, whereas lower castes are more like Asians. The researchers believe that the Indo-European speakers entered India from the Northwest, admixing with or displacing the proto-Dravidian speakers. Subsequently they may have established a caste system and placed themselves primarily in higher castes. The study concludes that the Indian castes "are most likely to be of proto-Asian origin with West Eurasian admixture resulting in rank-related and sex-specific

differences in the genetic affinities of castes to Asians and Europeans.".[23] Because the Indian samples for this study were taken from a single geographical area, it remains to be investigated whether its findings can be safely generalized.[24]

A 2003 report by “T. Kivisild” et al. conclde that the "Indian tribal and caste populations derive largely from the same genetic heritage of Pleistocene Southern and western Asians and have received limited gene flow from external regions since the Holocene." These scientists conclude that their observation does not refute the existence of genetic footprints in India from central Asia, eastern Europe or elsewhere. The genetic influence is higher in northwest regions of India, than other parts. Further, such broad estimates, according to these scientists are preliminary, at best. It will take larger sample sizes, more populations, and increased molecular resolution to determine the impact of historic gene flows to India.[25]

A 2006 genetic study by the National Institute of Biologicals in India, testing a sample of men from 32 tribal and 45 caste groups, concluded that the Indians have acquired very few genes from Indo-European speakers.[26] The conclusion of this study has been disputed by later studies.[27]

According to a 2006 study by “Ismail Thanseem” et al. of Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology (India) "the vast majority of the Indian maternal gene pool, consisting of Indo-European and Dravidian speakers, is genetically more or less uniform", while the invasions after the late

Pleistocene settlement might have been mostly male-mediated.[28] The study concluded that the "lower caste groups might have originated with the hierarchical divisions that arose within the tribal groups with the spread of Neolithic agriculturalists, much earlier than the arrival of Aryan speakers", and "the Indo-Europeans established themselves as upper castes among this already developed caste-like class structure within the tribes." The study indicated that the Indian caste system may have its roots much before the arrival of the Indo-Aryan immigrants, a rudimentary version of the caste system may have emerged with the shift towards cultivation and settlements, and the divisions may have become more well-defined and intensified with the arrival of Indo-Aryans.[29]

A 2009 article published in Nature finds strong evidence for at least two ancient populations in India, genetically divergent, that are ancestral to most Indians today. One, the Ancestral North Indians, who are genetically close to Middle Easterners, Central Asians, and Europeans, whereas the other, the Ancestral South Indians, who are genetically distinct from Ancestral North Indians and East Asians as they are from each other. The study observes that genetic markers suggest endogamy within population clusters was prevalent in various Indian kingdoms over time. The report includes a novel method to estimate ancestry without accurate ancestral populations. With this method, the scientists show that Ancestral North Indians ancestry ranges from 39–71% in most Indian groups, and is higher in traditionally upper caste

and Indo-European language speakers. Groups with only Ancestral South Indians ancestry may no longer exist in mainland India due to genetic pool mixing. However, the indigenous Andaman Islanders are unique in being Ancestral South Indians-related groups without Ancestral North Indians ancestry.[30]

A 2010 review claims that there are at least four population groups in diverse India.[31] Other than Ancestral North Indians and Ancestral South Indians, the population consists of Tibeto-Burman, Austro-Asiatic and Andamanese genetic pools suggesting human beings migrated into India from Africa, Eurasia, Tibet and Southeast Asia. The review paper notes that studies so far were based on small sample sets for the diversity in India. With the availability of new genotyping technologies, future diversity studies encompassing a large number of populations, both tribals and castes, at the genome-wide level may help understand patterns of micro-evolution of populations in India. The caste system in India is possibly a complex intra-group and inter-group admixes of interactions between various population groups.

References of Caste System in Hindu scriptures

The most ancient scriptures - the *Shruti* texts, or Vedas, place very little importance on the caste system, mentioning caste only sparingly and descriptively (i.e., not prescriptive). Indeed, the only verse in the *Rigveda*

which mentions all four *Varnas* is 10.90, the *Purushasukta*. A hymn from the Rig Veda seems to indicate that one's caste is not necessarily determined by that of one's family:

I am a bard, my father is a physician, my mother's job is to grind the corn.

-Rig Veda 9.112.3

In the Vedic period, there also seems to have been no discrimination against the Shudras on the issue of hearing the sacred words of the Vedas and fully participating in all religious rituals, something which became progressively restricted in the later times.[32]

Later scriptures such as *Bhagavad Gita* and *Manusmriti* state that the four Varnas are created by God. However, at the same time, the Gita says that one's varna is to be understood from one's personal qualities and one's *karma* (work), not one's birth. The Indian society honoured people on their achievements irrespective of their caste. For instance, Valmiki, once a low-caste robber, became a great sage and author of the epic Ramayana. Veda Vyasa, another respected sage and author of the monumental epic, the Mahabharata, was the son of a fisherwoman.[33]

“Manusmriti”, dated between 200 BCE and 100 AD, contains some laws that codified the caste system. The Manusmriti belongs to a class of books that are geared towards ethics, morals, and social conduct - not spirituality or

religion. In this text, the sage Manu explains that society is like the human body, where all body parts are required to function optimally in order to ensure the optimal function of society as a whole. He divided this metaphoric body into four main constituent parts: Head, Arms, Torso, Legs The head of a body is required for thinking, planning, and decision making. Thus the metaphoric head of society (Brahmins) were also responsible for these things. The arms of a body are responsible for protection of the body. Thus the arms of society were the Kshatriyas who were responsible for protection of the society. The torso of the body is responsible for consumption, production, and to hold society together as a whole. Thus, the Vaishya class was likened to the torso and constituted of the peasants, farmers, merchants, etc. Finally, the legs of a body are what carry the entire body altogether without which the body can make no movement or progress. These legs are the hardest physically working part of the body. The Shudra class of laborers was likened to the legs and was responsible for most physical labor jobs.

Historical Records about Caste System in India

A historical record of ancient North Indian society is provided by the Greek Megasthenes, who, in his Indika, described the society as being made up of "seven castes" as follows:[34]

"The whole population of India is divided into seven castes, of which the first is formed by the collective body of the Philosophers, which in point of

number is inferior to the other castes, but in point of dignity preminent over all. For the philosophers, being exempted from all public duties, are neither the masters nor the servants of others. They are, however, engaged by private persons to offer the sacrifices due in lifetime, and to celebrate the obsequies of the dead: for they are believed to be most dear to the gods. In requital of such services they receive valuable gifts and privileges. To the people of India at large they also render great benefits, when, gathered together at the beginning of the year, they forewarn the assembled multitudes about droughts and wet weather, and also about propitious winds, and diseases, and other topics capable of profiting-the hearers. Thus the people and the sovereign, learning beforehand what is to happen, always make adequate provision against a coming deficiency, and never fail to prepare beforehand what will help in a time of need. The philosopher who errs in his predictions incurs no other penalty than obloquy, and he then observes silence for the rest of his life."

The other classes are also described by Arryan, in The Anabasis AlexAndhrae, Book VIII: Indica (2nd c. CE) relying on the account of Megasthenes.

"Then next to these come the farmers, these being the most numerous class of Indians, they have no use for warlike arms or warlike deeds, but they till the land, and they pay the taxes to the kings and to the cities, such as are

self-governing, and if there is internal war among the Indians, they may not touch these workers, and not even devastate the land itself, but some are making war and slaying all comers, and others close by are peacefully ploughing or gathering the fruits or shaking down apples or harvesting.

The third classes of Indians are the herdsmen, sheep and cattle pastoralists, and these dwell neither by cities nor in the villages. They are nomads and get their living on the hillsides, and they pay taxes from their animals, they hunt also birds and wild game in the country.

The fourth class is of artisans and shopkeepers, these are workers, and pay tribute from their works, save such as make weapons of war, these are paid by the community. In this class are the shipwrights and sailors, who navigate the rivers.

The fifth class of Indians is the soldiers' class, next after the farmers in number, these have the greatest freedom and the most spirit. They practise military pursuits only. Their weapons others forge for them, and again others provide horses, others too serve in the camps, those who groom their horses and polish their weapons, guide the elephants, and keep in order and drive the chariots. They themselves, when there is need of war, go to war, but in time of peace they make merry, and they receive so much pay from the community that they can easily from their pay support others.

The sixth class of Indians are those called overseers. They oversee everything that goes on in the country or in the cities, and this they report to the king, where the Indians are governed by kings, or to the authorities, where they are independent. To these it is illegal to make any false report, nor was any Indian ever accused of such falsification.

The seventh class is those who deliberate about the community together with the king, or, in such cities as are self-governing, with the authorities. In number this class is small, but in wisdom and uprightness it bears the palm from all others, from this class are selected their governors, district governors and deputies, custodians of the treasures, officers of army and navy, financial officers and overseers of agricultural works.

The same man may not practise two pursuits, nor change from one class into another, as to turn farmer from shepherd, or shepherd from artisan. It is only permitted to join the wise men out of any class, for their business is not an easy one, but of all most laborious."

Evolution of Rigid Caste Structures in India

Megasthenes, the Greek ambassador to ChAndhragupta Maurya's court in India classified people of India into seven classes: philosophers, peasants, herdsmen, craftsmen and traders, soldiers, government officials and councilors.

In its later stages, the caste system is said to have become rigid, and caste began to be inherited rather than acquired by merit. In the past, members of different castes would not partake in various activities, such as dining and religious gatherings, together. In addition, the performance of religious rites and rituals were restricted to Brahmins, who were the designated priesthood. The "Pandaram" priests are an example of an order of priests, based in Nepal [35] and South India.[36] The Pandaram maintain the same tradition as the Brahmin priests, including the use of the Sanskrit language (traditionally reserved for the Brahmins) for the rituals. While they are not generally as well trained as the Brahmin priests, they are highly respected within their community and are addressed with reverence.[37]

According to the Manusmriti, every caste belongs to one of the four Varnas (Brahmin, Kshtriya, Vaishya, and Shudra). However, there have been many disputes about the Varna of many castes, such as castes being considered Kshatriya by some scholars, while described as Shudra by others. While texts such as the Manusmriti attempted to rationalize ambiguous castes by placing them in Varna-sankaras (i.e. mixed Varna), the fact remains that Indian society was, and is, composed of numerous geographically diversified but endogamous groups. With many occupational groups practicing endogamy within a particular region, as well as numerous sub-divisions within the four main castes, a more complex system of subcastes and jātis is evident. The jatis have broken up into clans like Agarwal, Iyer, etc.

Mobility across the Castes

The view of the caste system as "static and unchanging" has been disputed by many scholars. For instance, sociologists such as “Bernard Buber” and “Marriott McKim” describe how the perception of the caste system as a static and textual stratification has given way to the perception of the caste system as a more processual, empirical and contextual stratification. Other sociologists such as “Y.B Damle” have applied theoretical models to explain mobility and flexibility in the caste system in India.[38] According to these scholars, groups of lower-caste individuals could seek to elevate the status of their caste by attempting to emulate the practices of higher castes.

Some scholars believe that the relative ranking of other castes was fluid or differed from one place to another prior to the arrival of the British.[39]

The distinctions, particularly between the Brahmanas and the other castes, were in theory sharper, but in practice it now appears that social restrictions were not so rigid. Brahmanas often lived off the land and founded dynasties. Most of the groups claiming Kshatriya status had only recently acquired it. The conscious reference to being Kshatriya, a characteristic among Rajputs, is a noticeable feature in post-Gupta politics. The fact that many of these dynasties were of obscure origin suggests some social mobility: a person of any caste, having once acquired political power, could also acquire a genealogy connecting him with the traditional lineages and

conferring Kshatriya status. A number of new castes, such as the Kayasthas (scribes) and Khatris (traders), are mentioned in the sources of this period. According to the Brahmanaic sources, they originated from intercaste marriages, but this is clearly an attempt at rationalizing their rank in the hierarchy. Many of these new castes played a major role in society. The hierarchy of castes did not have a uniform distribution throughout the country.[40]

Flexibility in caste laws permitted very low-caste religious clerics such as Valmiki to compose the Ramayana, which became a central work of Hindu scripture.

According to some psychologists, mobility across broad caste lines may have been "minimal", though sub-castes (jatis) may change their social status over the generations by fission, re-location, and adoption of new rituals.[41]

Sociologist “M. N. Srinivas” has also debated the question of rigidity in Caste. In an ethnographic study of the Coorgs of Karnataka, he observed considerable flexibility and mobility in their caste hierarchies.[42] He asserts that the caste system is far from a rigid system in which the position of each component caste is fixed for all time. Movement has always been possible, and especially in the middle regions of the hierarchy. It was always possible for groups born into a lower caste to "rise to a higher position by adopting Vegetarianism and teetotalism" i.e. adopt the customs of the higher castes.

While theoretically "forbidden", the process was not uncommon in practice. The concept of sanskritization, or the adoption of upper-caste norms by the lower castes, addressed the actual complexity and fluidity of caste relations.

Historical examples of mobility in the Indian Caste System among Hindus have been researched. There is also precedent of certain Shudra families within the temples of the Shrivaishnava sect in South India elevating their caste.[43]

Historical Advantages of the Caste System

Historically, the caste system offered several advantages to the population of the Indian subcontinent. While Caste is nowadays seen by instances that render it anachronistic, in its original form the caste system served as an important instrument of order in a society in which mutual consent rather than compulsion ruled, where the ritual rights as well as the economic obligations of members of one caste or sub-caste were strictly circumscribed in relation to those of any other caste or sub-caste, where one was born into one's caste and retained one's station in society for life, where merit was inherited, where equality existed within the caste, but inter-caste relations were unequal and hierarchical. A well-defined system of mutual interdependence through a division of labour created security within a community.[44]

1. Preservation of order in society through the use of institutional stratification of social groups.[45]

2. Integration of foreigners and invading forces into Indian culture by assigning a caste to them (a process that India's first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru referred to as "Indianization" [46]): India has faced repeated invasions from outside the region, dating back to the Macedonian invasion by Alexander the Great. Most invaders were swiftly assimilated into ancient Indian society by assigning them specific castes. Examples include the Kambojas, believed to be of Indo-Scythian descent, who were retroactively assigned a social position in the Manusmriti.

3. The Varna system, with its normative interpretation as a division of labor, had and continues to have a heavy bias towards spiritual evolution. The deep religious proclivities and the urge for spiritual uplift had induced the people to search for simpler and effective ways to achieve the spiritual goal which led to innovations like the Bhakti movement which had a powerful impact on the socio-cultural-spiritual life of the people even at mass level without distinctions of caste or class or other social differences. It is these deeply run cultural roots which caused an abiding following for Hinduism even in the face of unrelenting assaults by other religions and had in fact continued to

influence the lives of people even after their conversion to other faiths. Thus, the caste system can be said to have preserved ancient cultural values in Indian society.

4. The caste system played an influential role in shaping economic activities.[47] The caste system functioned much like medieval European guilds, ensuring the division of labour, providing for the training of apprentices and, in some cases, allowing manufacturers to achieve narrow specialisation. For instance, in certain regions, producing each variety of cloth was the speciality of a particular sub-caste.

5. Philosophers argue that the majority of people would be comfortable in stratified endogamous groups and have been in ancient times.[48] Membership in a particular caste, with its associated narrative, history and genealogy would instill in its members a sense of group accomplishment and cultural pride. Such sentiments are routinely expressed by the Marathas, for instance.

Caste System During British rule

The caste system had been a fascination of the British since their arrival in India. Coming from a society that was divided by class, the British attempted to equate the caste system to the class system. As late as 1937 “Professor T. C. Hodson” stated that, "Class and caste” stand to each other in

the relation of family to species. The general classification is by classes, the detailed one by castes. The former represents the external, the latter the internal view of the social organization." The difficulty with definitions such as this is that class is based on political and economic factors, caste is not. In fairness to Professor Hodson, by the time of his writing, caste had taken on many of the characteristics that he ascribed to it and that his predecessors had ascribed to it but during the 19th century caste was not what the British believed it to be. It did not constitute a rigid description of the occupation and social level of a given group and it did not bear any real resemblance to the class system. However, this will be dealt with later in this essay. At present, the main concern is that the British saw caste as a way to deal with a huge population by breaking it down into discrete chunks with specific characteristics. Moreover, as will be seen later in this paper, it appears that the caste system extant in the late 19th and early 20th century has been altered as a result of British actions so that it increasingly took on the characteristics that were ascribed to it by the British.[49]

One of the main tools used in the British attempt to understand the Indian population was the census. Attempts were made as early as the beginning of the 19th century to estimate populations in various regions of the country but these, as earlier noted, were methodologically flawed and led to grossly erroneous conclusions. It was not until 1872 that a planned comprehensive census was attempted. This was done under the direction of

“Henry Beverely”, Inspector General of Registration in Bengal. The primary purpose given for the taking of the census that of governmental preparedness to deal with disaster situations, was both laudable and logical. However, the census went well beyond counting heads or even enquiring into sex ratios or general living conditions. Among the many questions were enquiries regarding nationality, race, tribe, religion and caste. Certainly none of these things were relevant to emergency measures responses by the government. Further, neither the notion of curiosity nor planned subterfuge on the part of the administration suffices to explain their inclusion in the census. On the question of race or nationality it could be argued that these figures were needed to allow analyses of the various areas in an attempt to predict internal unrest. However, there does not appear to have been any use made of the figures from that perspective. With regard to the information on religion and caste, the same claim could be made but once again there does not appear to have been any analyses done with the thought of internal disturbance in mind. Obviously there had to be some purpose to the gathering of this data since due to the size of both the population and the territory to be covered, extraneous questions would not have been included due to time factors. Therefore, there must have been a reason of some sort for their inclusion. That reason was, quite simply, the British belief that caste was the key to understanding the people of India. Caste was seen as the essence of Indian society, the system through which it was possible to classify all of the various

groups of indigenous people according to their ability, as reflected by caste, to be of service to the British.[50]

Caste was seen as an indicator of occupation, social standing, and intellectual ability. It was, therefore necessary to include it in the census if the census was to serve the purpose of giving the government the information it needed in order to make optimum use of the people under its administration. Moreover, it becomes obvious that British conceptions of racial purity were interwoven with these judgments of people based on caste when reactions to censuses are examined. Beverly concluded that a group of Muslims were in fact converted low caste Hindus. This raised howls of protest from representatives of the group as late as 1895 since it was felt that this was a slander and a lie. H. H. Risely, Commissioner of the 1901 census, also showed British beliefs in an 1886 publication which stated that race sentiment, far from being:[51]

"a figment of the intolerant pride of the Brahmana, rests upon a foundation of fact which scientific methods confirm, that it has shaped the intricate grouping of the caste system, and has preserved the Aryan type in comparative purity throughout Northern India."

Here is a prime example of the racial purity theories that had been developing throughout the 19th century. Here also is the plainest explanation for the inclusion of the questions on race, caste and religion being included

with the censuses. Thus far this essay has dwelt almost entirely with British actions to the exclusion of any mention of Indian actions and reactions. This should not be taken to mean that the Indians were passive or without input into the process. Any change within a society requires the participation of all the groups if it is to have any lasting effect. The Indian people had a very profound effect on the formulation of the census and their analysis. However, Indian actions and reaction must be considered within the context of Indian history and Indian culture in the same way that British actions must be considered within British cultural context. For this reason, it has been necessary to postpone consideration of Indian reactions and contributions to the British activities until the next section of this essay which will then be followed by a more in depth examination of the development of British attitudes. Finally, the results of the combination of both Indian and British beliefs will be examined with a view to reaching a consensus on how they affected the compilation of and conclusions reached through the censuses.[52]

The word caste is not a word that is indigenous to India. It originates in the Portuguese word casta which means race, breed, race or lineage. However, during the 19th century, the term caste increasingly took on the connotations of the word race. Thus, from the very beginning of western contact with the subcontinent European constructions have been imposed on Indian systems and institutions.[53]

To fully appreciate the caste system one must step away from the definitions imposed by Europeans and look at the system as a whole, including the religious beliefs that are an integral part of it. To the British, viewing the caste system from the outside and on a very superficial level, it appeared to be a static system of social ordering that allowed the ruling class or Brahmins, to maintain their power over the other classes. What the British failed to realize was that Hindus existed in a different cosmological frame than did the British. The concern of the true Hindu was not his ranking economically within society but rather his ability to regenerate on a higher plane of existence during each successive life.[54]

Reform Movements for Eradication of Caste System

There have been cases of upper caste Hindus warming to the Dalits and Hindu priests, demoted to outcaste ranks, who continued practising the religion. An example of the latter was "Dnyaneshwar", who was excommunicated from society in the 13th century, but continued to compose the Dnyaneshwari, a Dharmic commentary on the Bhagavad Gita. Other excommunicated Brahmins, such as "Eknath", fought for the rights of untouchables during the Bhakti period. Historical examples of Dalit priests include Chokhamela in the 14th century, who was India's first recorded Dalit poet, "Raidas", born into Dalit cobblers, and others. The 15th century saint "Ramananda" also accepted all castes, including untouchables, into his fold.

Most of these saints subscribed to the Bhakti movements in Hinduism during the medieval period that rejected casteism. Nandanar, a low-caste Hindu cleric, also rejected casteism and accepted Dalits.[55]

Many movements in Hinduism have welcomed Dalits into their fold, the foremost being the Bhakti movements of the medieval period. Early Dalit politics involved many Hindu reform movements which arose primarily as a reaction to the tactics of Christian Missionaries in India and their attempts to mass-convert Dalits to Christianity under the allure of escaping the caste system (unfortunately, there is Caste system among Indian Christians among large sections of Indian Christians).**[56]**

In the 19th century, the Brahmo Samaj under "Raja Ram Mohan Roy", actively campaigned against untouchability. The Arya Samaj founded by "Swami Dayanand" also renounced discrimination against Dalits. "Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa" founded the Ramakrishna Mission that participated in the emancipation of Dalits. Upper caste Hindus, such as "Mannathu Padmanabhan" also participated in movements to abolish Untouchability against Dalits, opening his family temple for Dalits to worship. While there always have been places for Dalits to worship, the first "upper-caste" temple to openly welcome Dalits into their fold was the Laxminarayan Temple in Wardha in the year 1928 (the move was spearheaded by reformer Jamnalal Bajaj). Also, the Satnami movement was founded by "Guru

Ghasidas”, a Dalit himself. Other reformers, such as “Mahatma Jyotirao Phule” also worked for the emancipation of Dalits. Another example of Dalit emancipation was the Temple Entry Proclamation issued by the last Maharaja of Travancore in the Indian state of Kerala in the year 1936. The Maharaja proclaimed that "outcastes should not be denied the consolations and the solace of the Hindu faith". Even today, the Sri Padmanabhaswamy temple that first welcomed Dalits in the state of Kerala is revered by the Dalit Hindu community. The 1930s saw key struggles between Mahatma Gandhi and B.R. Ambedkar, most notably over whether Dalits would have separate electorates or joint electorates with reserved seats. The Indian National Congress was the only national organisation with a large Dalit following, but Gandhi failed to gain their commitment. “Ambedkar”, a Dalit himself, developed a deeper analysis of Untouchability, but lacked a workable political strategy: his conversion to Buddhism in 1956, along with millions of followers, highlighted the failure of his political endeavours.[57] India's first Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, based on his own relationship with Dalit reformer Ambedkar, also spread information about the dire need to eradicate untouchability for the benefit of the Dalit community.

In more contemporary times, India has had an elected Dalit president, K. R. Narayanan, who has stated that he was well-treated in his community of largely upper-caste Hindus [58] (24 July 2002). Another popular Harijan includes Babaji Palwankar Baloo, who joined the Hindu Mahasabha and was

both a politician and a cricketer. He was an independence fighter. In addition, other Hindu groups have reached out to the Dalit community in an effort to reconcile with them, with productive results. On August 2006, Dalit activist Namdeo Dhasal engaged in dialogue with the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh in an attempt to "bury the hatchet".[59]

Also, the "Pandaram" are an order of Dravidian Tamil Hindu priests (a task traditionally reserved for the Brahmins) based largely in Nepal and parts of South India.[60] These Pandaram priests maintain the same tradition as the Brahmin priests, including using Sanskrit for the rituals. They perform religious ceremonies from weddings to death rituals. They are highly respected within the tamil community and are addressed reverentially.[61] Also, Hindu temples are increasingly more receptive to Dalit priests, such as Suryavanshi Das, the Dalit priest of a notable temple in the midst of Patna, the capital of Bihar.[62]

Discrimination against Hindu Dalits is on a slow but steady decline. The results of Bhakti Movements are clearly visible. Numerous Hindu Dalits have achieved affluence in society, although vast still remain poor irrespective of caste. In urban India, discrimination against Dalits is largely disappeared, but rural Dalits are struggling to elevate themselves. Government organizations and NGO's work to emancipate them from discrimination, and many Hindu organizations have spoken in their favor.[63]

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CHAPTER IV

CASTE SYSTEM IN ANCIENT SOUTH INDIA

In this chapter an attempt is made to discuss the Caste System in ancient South India chronologically. But due to scanty evidences about caste system dynasty wise in ancient Andhra and Karnataka, caste system in these states is discussed in a general manner.

The earliest indication or Tamil society is gleaned from the Sangam classics. It is still a subject of controversy as to when these classics were composed. According to the views advanced by scholars, the dates range from about 500 BCE to 600 CE.[1]

In the absence of exact chronology in the Sangam works, indirect references are to be relied upon. Mention of commercial relationship with the West, particularly with Greece and Rome is made in certain Sangam classics.[2] The trade of the Tamils with the Yavanas, which name was first applied to the Greeks then to the Romans and in due course to all foreigners, is reflected not only in some the Sangam classics, but is corroborated by the description provided by the Greek and Roman writers and geographers of the first and second centuries CE.

“Strabo” mentions that he saw about 120 ships sailing from Hormuz to India in 25 BCE.[3] He also speaks of two Padyan embassies to the emperor

Augustus. The anonymous author of the "Periplus of the Erythrean Sea", as well as "Pliny", both assignable to the 1st century CE, as also "Ptolemy" of the succeeding century, describe the ports of South India and the commercial relationship that they had with the Western countries.[4] This coincidence of the accounts of the foreign writers of the first and second centuries CE with the references in the Sangam classics indicate that these literary works belong more or less to this epoch. Moreover, the hoards of Roman coins unearthed in South India indicate the period when Roman commerce reached its zenith. By far the largest numbers of these coins belong to Augustus and Tiberius.[5] It is remarkable that there is a scarcity of Roman coins subsequent to the reign of Tiberius (13-37 CE.). After the 2nd century CE the Romans traded more with the north-western region of India than with the Tamil country.

Possibly the most decisive piece of evidence regarding the date of the Roman trade and thereby supporting the references in the Tamil classics to the commercial relationship is provided by the recently discovered finds at Arikamedu. The excavations have revealed that Arikamedu was not only an ancient town and port, evidently identifiable with the 'Poduke' of "Ptolemy", but also a centre of trade with Greeco-Roman world. The unique value of the discoveries lies in the fact that they enable us to date the culture of the region almost precisely. On the basis of internal and external evidence, Dr. Mortimer Wheeler concludes that the pottery and the Arretine ware and amphorae

imported from Italy can be dated to 20-50 A.D. "From a convergence of evidence it is here inferred," he says, "that the sites were first occupied at the end of the first century BCE or beginning of the first century CE with an inclination towards the later date."[6] Sometime in the second century CE the warehouse in Arikamedu appears to have been deserted, the glorious epoch of Arikamedu's industrial and commercial activity ranged about the first two centuries of the Christian era. Thus the testimony provided by Arikamedu confirms the evidence furnished by the European writers on the one hand and by that of the Sangam classics on the other. From these it follows that the Sangam age flourished in the second century C.E. Therefore, it is not improbable that the Sangam (probably what is known as the third Sangam) existed between the first and third centuries CE. This is the basic substratum of the chronology of the early Tamils.

Regarding the social history of the Tamils from the post-sangam upto medieval periods the sources of information are inscriptions, literature and notices by foreigners. Stone inscriptions provide valuable informations though they are of greater help for political history. Incidental references are however found throwing light on the social and economic conditions of the people. But a tendency to over assess the credibility of the epigraphic data in comparison with the literary evidence is often noticed, which is not justifiable. The literary and religious treatises like the *Devaram* hynms, the *Nalayiraprabandham*, the *Jivakachintamani* and *Periyapuranam* are of considerable value, to be used

with care and discrimination. Foreign evidence, except for stray references by "Hiuen Tsang", and the later Muslim and European visitors, is not of great value. With the aid of the available sources the social history of the Tamils can be reconstructed. Here the development of the prominent factors, like the caste system can be considered.

Caste System during Sangam Age

It is generally believed that the institution of caste, the typical Hindu social organisation, was a creation of, the Aryans and that it was introduced by them into the Tamil country also. The Aryan influence had penetrated into Tamilagam as early as the Sangam age itself, for we find references to the four fold caste system in the Sangam literature. For instance, the poet king Aryappadaikadanda Neduncheliyan clearly speaks of the four-fold division based on birth.[7]

A more ample, though enigmatic, description of the caste system of the Tamils is found in the "*Tolkappiyam*". Tolkappiyar speaks of the four castes of Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaisyas and Sudras, though he employs appellations in terms of the Tamil language prevalent in the Tamil country. Thus he equates Brahmins with *Antanar*, Kshatriyas with *Arasar*, the Vaishyas without any modification and the Sudras with *Vellalas*. The implied identification of the Sudras with the *Vellalas* is inexplicable because, then, as ever afterwards, the *Vellalas* constituted only one section of the so-called Sudras.

In fact, there were several other groups included under the Aryan subdivision of the Sudras.

Besides, there are certain other deviations on the part of Tolkappiyar from the theoretical prescriptions of the Aryans. For instance, though warfare is the traditional avocation of the Kshatriyas, Tolkppiyar lays down different prescriptions at various places of his work. In one place he states that the weapons of war can be handled by Kshatriyas as well as Vaisyas,[8] in another context he says that Vellalas too, if ordered by kings, were entitled to use weapons of war.[9] In fact, the position of the Kshatriyas is not clearly stated by Tolkappiyar. It must be remembered that he permitted the Kshatriyas marrying women of the Velir or higher Vellala caste. Again, Tolkappiyar holds that Brahmins, too, could become kings at times.[10]

Moreover, Brahmins, Kshatriyas and Vaishyas were considered by Tolkppiyar as dvijas and as such were entitled to wear the sacred thread, on the other hand, no reference to any people of non-Brahmin caste wearing it is found in any of the Sangam works. Besides, several Brahmins took to secular occupations. The most prominent instance is that of Nakkirar, the Velapparpan who earned his livelihood by carving conch-shells into bracelets.[11]

Thus we find that though the idea of hereditary caste based on birth had appeared even in the Sangam age, it was not exactly identical with the

system in vogue in north India. One reason for this variation was that the incoming Aryans did not have at first the political power of enforcing their system throughout the country including Tamilnadu. It was a case of peaceful introduction of their social classification on the basis of self assumed spiritual authority.

A far more important reason for the slow and rather haphazard introduction of the Aryan institution of caste is to be found in the strength of the indigenous pattern of social organisation prevalent in the Tamil country before the advent of Aryans. Here, in early times social organisation arose on the basis of occupation and not on that of birth. It has been rightly said that 'the spirit of Dravidian culture was castelessness'.[12] From the Sangam classics it appears that the Tamil society existed on the physiographic basis of the regions: *kurinchi*, the hill country, *mullai*, the pastoral region, *neydal*, the coastal tract, *marudam*, the land of agricultural plains and *palai*, the sandy region or desert. It is important to remember that the migration of persons from one region to another was not impossible. In fact, the Kurava from the *kurinchi* territory could settle in the *mullai* region and become an *idaiya* or cowherd, if he moved on to the *marudam* and took to farming he would become a *vellalam*. Where specialised skill was needed there must have been a tendency for people to stick to their occupation and the region originally occupied by them. This must have been largely the case in respect of the fishermen of the *neydal* region. But in the generality of cases people

could migrate to other regions and take to new occupations. To thrust the chaturvarna system into the Tamil structure, which was organised on an occupational and physiographic basis was not an easy affair. Naturally the resulting fusion was of a loose and flexible character, with several anomalies.

In the Sangam age, after the coalescence of the Aryan pattern with the indigenous system in a rough and ready manner, most of the people in the *kurinchi*, *mullai*, *marudam* and *neydal* must have been grouped miscellaneously as Vellalar according to Tolkippiyar.[13] Brahmins must have lived mostly in the *marudam* and in a few towns. The practice of Brahmins residing in separate quasters had arisen as early as the Sangam age. The quarters where the Brahmins lived were known as *parpancheheri*. In certain villages, there were streets where Brahmins alone resided. The *Kuruntogai* speaks of the Brahmin Street as asil teruv.[14] Amur was a predominantly Brahinin village in Oymanadu.[15] Again, the *Perumpanarruppadai* speaks of a village on the way to Kanchi as Maral Kappalar Uraipati.[16]

Territorially differentiated units of culture and society are deeply imbedded in the earliest Dravidian culture of the classical period. According to one of the Classical works of this early period of Tamil literature, possibly the third century CE., social groups in Tamil country were divided into five situational types on the basis of natural sub-region and related occupational

patterns. The Pattupatru enumerates these territorial segments (or tinai) as follows:[17]

1. *Maruta makkal* or tribes of ploughmen (*ulavar*) inhabiting fertile, well-watered tracts (*panai*) and living in villages called ur,
2. *Kuravar makkal* (or hill people who are foresters, make charms, and tell fortunes and may come out of the forest to work in the *panai*,
3. *Mullai makkal* (or pastoralists, also called *ayar* (cowmen), *kovalar* (shepherds), and *idaiyar* (cowherd or shepherd),
4. *Neytal makkal* (or fishing people living in large coastal villages called *pattinam* or small ones called *pakkam*, and
5. Palai makkal or people of the dry plains called eyinar. maravar, and veIar who are hunters of both the dry plains and the forest.

This five-fold division of ancient Tamil speakers is interesting for a variety of reasons. As a richly elaborated poetic scheme, it provides a pool of images which gives these poems much of their expressive power. Beyond that, as a description of spatial categories of Tamil subcultures they are important cultural concepts. Finally, these categories suggest a ranking postulate comparable to the Varna concept elsewhere in the Indian cultural sphere. It is clear from Classical literature that the people of the first category, those of the *panai* who lived by the plough enjoyed a special place in the affection of the greatest Classical poets who were, for the most part, men of

the 'thriving soil' of the panai.[18] It is easy, of course, to make too much of this element of 'ancient' Tamil culture. For one reason, the chronology of the literature containing these cultural categories is still controversial, with one group of scholars favouring the period from the sixth to ninth century and another larger group favouring the earlier period.[19] Also, the relationships between the culture of a people, as reflected in a body of poetry collected and selected as anthologies centuries after being composed, and actual social patterns may be easily distorted.

Using the attributional and interactional markers discussed above, it is possible to delimit the macro region of 'South India' as understood here from other parts of the Southern peninsula. Specifically, this study will not deal with what is now most of the state of Maharashtra, nor with Orissa.

It is significant that there were no separate *cheris* or suburbs exclusively set apart for the Kshatriyas, Vaishyas or Vellalar. The difference was due to the circumstance that many Brahmins had come from outside and were settled in separate villages or streets. But it is wrong to think that all Brahmins had come from outside. The appellations *Vadama* *brihatcharanam* and *ashtasahasram* indicate that while many had come from the north, others were probably raised to the position of Brahminhood from among the indigenous people.[20]

The idea of superiority on the basis of caste had appeared even in the Sangam age, "Tolkappiyar" speaks of the *Uyarndor*-the superior class and, the *pinnor*-the lower or the backward class. It may be added that the *Vellalar*, who were generally *pinnor* (lower) in relation to other communities, were themselves subdivided into superior and inferior sections. The superiors were the landowners, and it is important to remember in this connection that the superior Vellalas enjoyed *jus connubium* with the *Arasar*, and some of these Vellalas were actually chieftains ruling in certain parts of Tamilagam.

Untouchability during Sangam Age

The question is frequently asked whether untouchability had appeared among the Tamils of the Sangam age. It is difficult to give a definite answer to this question. There are no doubt references in some of the Sangam classics to the low birth of persons of certain groups. The appellations of *ilipirappalan* and *ilichinan*, applied to people of low born castes are expressive of contempt for persons of low birth.[21] Another poem in the Purananuru speaks of the *kadaisiyar* referring to women of the lowest class.[22] From the context it appears that this reference is to women of the agricultural labouring class. But while all these references indicate a rather contemptuous position of certain low classes of people, positive evidence regarding the practice of untouchability in the Sangam age is lacking. It seems that though the germs

of untouchability were there in the Sangam age itself, the full fledged untouchability came to take shape in the Pallava and Chola epochs.

The *Devurams* which are mostly assignable to the epoch of the great Pallavas reveal that untouchability had clearly developed. It appeared primarily in relation to entry into temples and by the time of the Imperial Cholas it became elaborately systematised. The extent upto which the different categories of persons could enter the various parts of the temple was systematically worked out by the 11th and 12th centuries CE. This was the period when the rituals and ceremonies of the temples increased in number and prominence. The temples themselves became more numerous during this epoch. The rules and regulations in respect of the temples had their reflection in the day-to-day social life of the people. In fact, the multiplication of sub-castes in the age of the Imperial Cholas was not a little due to the privileges enjoyed by people of various castes in temples.

One basis for the development of untouchability in the post Sangam age was the habit of eating animal food. Whether all classes of people used meat and fish as part of their diet in the Sangam age? From certain references in *Perumpanaruppadai* it is clear that generally Brahmins were scrupulous vegetarians. The description appearing in the *Perumpanaruppadai*[23] of a Brahmin house shows that animals except cows were not to desecrate the vicinity of Brahmin houses. Dogs and hens were not allowed to enter the

houses of Brahmins. These facts indicate that animal food was eschewed by them. The *Perumpanaruppadai* describes in another instance[24] the items of the dietary, presumably common among the Brahmins of those times. In addition to rice, which was the principal item, there was a preparation made out of pomegranate fruit mixed with, chilly powder and a pickle prepared out of mangoes. There is no mention of meat or fish, and the omission does not seem to have been accidental. Again in *Kuruntiogai*[25] there is description of *Kudalur Kilar* apparently a Brahmin lady serving food to her, husband. The details found in the description of the food show that the society was purely Vegetarian.

But those who hold that in the Sangam age the Brahmins had not taken to an exclusive vegetarian diet point out that Brahmins of the Vedic and the immediately succeeding periods were accustomed to eating meat and that the same custom was continued in the South during the Sangam age. More important is the oft-repeated description of Kapilar, who proclaims himself a Brahmin, of the excellence of meat and drink with a personal relish.[26]

The real position seems to be, that in the beginning, all the Tamils, irrespective of caste, were non-vegetarians, and that as a result of the increasing influence of the Jain and Buddhist creeds in the land there appeared an opposition to the use of animal food.[27] Though it is difficult to determine the date of the change, it is clear that it must have appeared but

gradually. Therefore, it is possible that during the Sangam age, some including Brahmins, continued the old habit, while others changed over to a complete vegetarian diet.

Caste System during the age of the Pallavas

During the period of Kalabhra invasions, roughly ranging from the 4th to 6th centuries CE there was confusion in the Tamil country and the social organisation too, was upset. The Kalabhras were either Buddhists or Jains who were all opposed to the Hindu faith and the *varnasrama dharma*. With the overthrow of the Kalabhras by the end of the 6th century C.E there was a reaction in favour of Hinduism, particularly Brahminism, and it continued throughout the age of the powerful Pallavas. Whether the Pallavas were Brahinins or Kshatriyas has been a disputed question. It is likely that they were Kshatriyas, as may be inferred from Kakutsthavarman's Taalgunda inscription. But they assumed the Bharadvaja-gotra, probably that of their preceptors, and in any case the Pallavas were ardent supporters of Brahminism.[28]

During the Pallavas there seems to have been a vast influx of Brahmins from north India. Groups of Brahmins were welcomed and settled in different villages and were helped by generous grants of land and gifts. Inscriptions show how several *ghatikas* or sacred schools of learning under the patronage of Brahmins were established in the Pallava and Pandya territories.This was

also the time when numerous temples of stone were erected. And it need hardly be repeated that the temples were the citadels of the orthodox caste system and the supremacy of the Brahmin hierarchy. In the religious and social spheres the supremacy of the Brahmins was established. The kings patronised the Brahmins and supported them in their move for exalting Brahmins. Around the temples there appeared settlements of *agraharas* containing the residences for scholars devoted to the study and teaching of the Vedas.[29]

The rules prescribing the privileges of the various castes with reference particularly to the temples were formulated. It is well known that Mahendravarman II professed himself to be the champion of the *varnashrama-dharma.* Further, according to the Kasakudi plates, the Pallava rulers, in general, are said to have enforced the special rules of all castes and orders. With the systematisation of the four castes, their duties and rights, the tendency for the growth of sub-castes appeared. In particular, numerous small groups appeared among the Sudras, Intermarriages among them were not allowed.[30]

The age of the Great Pallavas marked the heyday of the Bhakti Movement in Taniilnadu. This encouraged devotion to temples and rituals. No doubt, the hymnists of the Bhakti movement were drawn from various castes, but a large number of them belonged to the higher castes. The patronising

attitude of the higher sections towards sincere devotees of the lower order like Nandanar and Tondardippodi-alvar only brings to the fore the increasing hold of casteism on the people of the age. Among the 63 Nyanmars, besides Brahmins and Arasar, there were Vanigar, Vellalas, Idaiyar, Kuyavar, Panar, Vedar, Sanar, Saliyar, Sekkár (Oil monger), Vannar (washer man) and Pulaiyar. Among the Alavars of about the same epoch, along with Brahniins, Kshatriyas, Vellalas and Majavas, there were some like Tondaradippodi, Tiruppan-alvar, not born in any of the four principal castes. It is significant that Tirumalisaiyar, though of a high caste, states in one of his hymns that he did not belong to any caste. [31]

In one sense the Bhakti movement registered a protest against caste. Sincere devotion to God irrespective of the differences of caste received the greatest emphasis.

Caste System during the age of the Imperial Cholas

During the period of the Imperial Cholas the social disparities which had appeared in the earlier epoch of the Pallavas continued in an accentuated form. Temples increased, and with them the rituals and ceremonies in temples increased. Caste regulations in respect of temples became rigorous. Untouchability and unapproachability developed. The number of sub-castes multiplied.[32]

New brahmadeyas appeared, and more Brahmins from the north were invited to settle down in new villages. *Ghatikas* and Vedic centres of learning increased in number. They promoted the study of the Vedas and of Sanskrit. For example, Kamappullur in North Arcot District, Aniyur in Chingleput District, Rajanjachaturvedimangalam in South Arcot District, Tribhuvani, Tirumukkudal, Tiruvaduturai, Peruvelur and Tiruvorriyur were some of the centres of Vedic learning. But in none of these were Tamil language and literature taught.[33]

It is true that several *mathas* arose attached to the temples. They promoted the study and recitation of tiruppadiyams and *prabandhas* which, too, were of a spiritual character. The language of these religious works was of a Manipravalam style. Nor the *mathas* were thrown open to all, they were the close preserves of the higher castes. The *madattu saita perumakkal* mentioned in Nripatungavarman's inscription dated in his 25th year, referred to the group of scholars in the *matha* and not to the people at large. This restriction continued in the days of the Imperial Cholas. The same social setup continued in the 16th-17th centuries. During this period when the Vijayanagara empire expanded into the Tamil country, several new-castes appeared on account of the inflow of Telugu and Kannadiga settlers in the Tamil country.[34]

Caste System in Ancient Andhra

Andhra Pradesh comprising all the Telugu speaking areas is a present day creation. But the Andhras as a, tribe or cultural entity, existed, in the Brahmanaical period. In the *Aitaraya Brahmanaa*, they were listed as a non-Aryan tribe along with others such as Pundras, Savaras, Pulindas and Mutibas. From very early times, it appears that the Andhras have been occupying the lower courses of the Godavari and the Krishna together with the adjoining areas.

Not much, however, is known about the socio-economic life of the Andhras during the pre-literate times. Archaeological evidence shows that settled habitation and agricultural activity started in the area around the middle of 3rd millennium BCE as elsewhere in Southern Deccan. For the next fifteen hundred years or more, these early farming communities, steadily progressed, increasing in size and multiplying in numbers as fresh areas were brought, under cultivations. There is much is common between these communities and their counterparts in Karnataka. The settlements were small and consisted of huts mostly circular on plan. Livelihood was based on cultivating millets and gram and rearing cattle, sheep and goats, supplemented by fishing and hunting. Making pots, stone tools and beads were among the other important occupations of the people. The dead were buried, but the mode of burial was different for adults and infants. The former

were packed into urns and buried beneath house floors, while the latter were buried in pots dug for the purpose.[35]

Some of the coastal settlements, principally those to the north of the Krishna river seem to have had direct links with the early farming communities of Maharashtra, Central India and Orissa. Evidence to this effect has been furnished by the excavations at Kesarapalle and Jami, in Krishna and Visakhapatnam Districts respectively. Even at Nagarjunakonda in Guntur District, there are in evidence certain burial practices parallel to those known from excavations in the Jalgaon District in Maharashtra.[36]

It is not clearly known when the Andhras passed into the fold of Aryan culture but it must have happened long before the foundation of the Mauryan empire. Aryanisation must have brought with it Vedic ritualism and caste system into this non-Aryan tribal society. Apastambha, one of the sutrakaras is believed to have sailed from Andhra-desa. The society shed off its tribal character, was reconstructed and given a new shape - a shape cast in the Aryan mould. In the new set up, each of the four traditional classes had clearly defined roles to fulfill, in which that of a Kshatriya was to protect and rule. Surely, the essentials of an urban society - institutionalised social inequalities, division of labour, social surplus, and at least a rudimentary form of government were satisfied. Megasthenes shows that the Andhras were an important power in the 4th century BCE with thirty walled towns and numerous

villages in their possession. Each of these urban units together with certain villages must have been held by a chieftain. But the Southward expansion of the Mauryan Empire amalgamated them all and absorbed them in its political framework.[37]

With the collapse of the Mauryan power in the Deccan, after the death of Asoka, the Shatavahanas filled the political vacuum by establishing an independent rule. The period of four centuries and a half for which the Shatavahanas ruled constitutes a bright chapter in the long history of the Andhras. In spite of many conflicts they had with the Western Kshatrapas the Shatavahanas were able to assure material prosperity and political stability to the inhabitants of vast areas in the Deccan. Periplus testified to the material well being of the people and the contemporary inscriptions, fully bear out the testimony.

But the society of the Shatavahana period was less homogeneous than before, the influx of new religious and racial elements having contributed to this effect. One of the effects of the Mauryan rule was the steady infiltration of the two faiths-Jainism and Buddhism into the Deccan. Of the two, the latter was more active and commanded a larger following. All along the coastal stretch in Andhra Pradesh, remains of ancient Buddhist establishments have come to light, the more important among them being Bhattiprolu, Amarvati, Nagarjunkonda, Jaggayyapaeta, Ghantasala, Sankaram and Salihundam. All

these were flourishing centres of Buddhism during Shatavahana period and some had their origin even earlier. Jainism was, perhaps, less active than the' other, but there can be little doubt that it had also a sizable following. Robert Sewell has noticed vestiges of Jainism in several of the districts of Andhra Pradesh and possibly some of them were of pre and early Christian times. The, recent discovery of a Jaina inscription of Kharavela at Guntupalle in West Godavari District justifies this possibility.[38]

The new religions received liberal patronage from both kings and commoners. At Amaravati for instance about 145 epigraphs have been found recording donations to the Buddhist *Sangha*. The benefactions were in the nature of donations of money, cultivable plots of land and even villages for the upkeep of the *Sangha*. Buddhism and Jainism must have exercised a deleterious effect on the firm hold the Vedic religion had on the society and so did the influx of new racial elements. Ever since 3rd century BCE, there was an inflow of foreigners into this country, either as conquerors or traders. Alexander's invasion made the Greeks 'a factor' in Indian history and the Greeks were 'soon followed on the Indian scene by the Sakas, Pahlavas and Kushnas. Historical forces brought the Sakas and Shatavahanas into a protracted struggle against one another, in which people and places changed hands many a time. This apart in the early centuries of the Christian era there was a flourishing trade between India and Rome. We learn from Ptolemy that Kantakassyla, Koddoira and Allosygne were important sea-ports in the

Maisolia region on the eastern sea board. Foreign merchants must have regularly stayed at the places mentioned. Thus for different reasons, the native and foreign societies came into close contact with one another with consequences affecting both of them. The foreigners soon lost their identity and were absorbed into the indigenous fold, but the absorption could take place only with the relaxation of some of the traditional rules governing the indigenous society.[39]

A logical corollary of the influx of non-orthodox religious faiths and alien races was the relaxation of caste rules to facilitate the assimilation of new elements into the society. The miscegenation of different caste groups must have assumed such great proportions that Gautamiputra Satakarni was constrained to assume the role of a protector of the four-fold caste system.[40]

Agriculture was the most important occupation of the people, but in an urban society, there was both need and scope for other professions to flourish. Inscriptions of the Shatavahana times speak of *halikas* (cultivators), *kularikas* (potters), *kolikas* (weavers), *kamaras* (smiths), *kasakaras* (braziers), *vasakaras* (bamboo-workers), *tilapisakas* (oil-mongers), *vadhakis* (carpenters) *sethis* (merchants), *odayantrikas*, (boatmen) etc. It appears that these professions were not the monopoly of one particular caste, although according to Vedic injunction Vaishyas were to be the tradesmen of the society. We hear from inscriptions of the instance of a Kshatriya who took up

the mercantile profession. The Shatavahanas were Brahmins by caste but became a ruling family. The professional groups in the society functioned as corporate bodies, each with its own bye-laws. The corporate bodies functioned even as banks, receiving monetary deposits and disposing of the interest accruing there from in the manner specified by the depositor. We learn from a Näsik inscription that Ushavadatta deposited two thousand *kahapanas* (Silver coins) with a guild of silk weavers at Govardhana and the interest payable at the rate of one percent per month was to be spent as cloth money for the monks spending the vassa season in the cave.[41]

The society of the Shatavahana times must have been fairly affluent, for without an economic surplus, it would not have been possible to found and maintain many religious establishments or engage on a large-scale mercantile activity with far off lands. Nevertheless, economic disparities within the society are clearly reflected by the brick-built houses and thatched huts which the rich and the poor constructed to live in. There are sculptural representations from Amaravati and other sites depicting the dwelling houses of the times while actual remains of the same may be witnessed from excavated sites. From the sculptures again we learn that both men and women loved to wear ornaments. Scant dress, abundance of ornaments and elaborate headgear seem to be the fashion of the times. From the sculptural reliefs of the time one gets the impression that women moved about without any inhibitions, freely

participated in social and religious activities and associated themselves with their husbands in benefactions to religious creeds or pious individuals.[42]

With the end of the Shatavahana rule, perhaps, passed the meridian of the glory of Buddhism in Andhra. The religion, however, continued to receive patronage from both the rulers and the commoners. Several of the Ikshvaku inscriptions from Nagarjunakonda record donations to the Buddhist *sangha*, the donors being mostly the female members of the royal family. Instances like these of the Ikshvaku period can easily be multiplied and epigraphic records show that patronage to Buddhism continued even in the post-Ikshvaku period. The Anandagotra king Damodaravarman and the Vishnukundin rulers Govindavarman and Vikramendravarman were all devotees of Lord Buddha. Nevertheless the fact remains that not many new centres of Buddhism were founded in the post-Satavähana period. The social structure of the Shatavahana period with liberty of profession continued. A powerful revival of Brahmanaism was the keynote of the society in Andhra ever since 3rd century CE. Vasishthiputra Siri Chantamula's performance of Vedic sacrifices like *Ashvamedha*, *Agnisthoma* and *Vajapeya* signalised this change in the religious outlook of the people.[43]

In consonance with the revival of Brahmanaism and the rise of Hindu religious sects, we find an unprecedented activity of temple construction. The temples were liberally provided with tax-free lands and other pecuniary

benefits. Along with the gods, the Brahmins also were the chief beneficiaries as a result of the changed spirit of the times. Many of the copper-plate inscriptions of the post-Satavhana and of the astern Chalukyan times were records of gifts of lands and villages to the learned members of the community (Brahamins) so that they might devote themselves to the performance of the Six traditional karmas-*yajna*, *yajana*, *adhyayana*, *adhyapana*, *dana* and *pratigrahana* enjoined upon them. These agraharas or lands and villages given over Vedic Brahmins must have enjoyed a great measure of autonomy in their governance. They were a more or less self-governing corporation of learned Brahmins devoted to their traditional vocation. Other vocational groups in the society must have also organised themselves as self-governing corporations, though expressive epigraphic references to their activities are not found till 1000 CE or later. It is important to note that each of these corporations functioned as a socio-economic unit, membership of the corporation being determined not only by e sameness of occupation, but to a large extent by the accident of birth as well. In course of time, these vocational groups crystallized as so many sub-castes or jatis, which were a constituent element of the society in medieval Andhra.[44]

In Andhra, as elsewhere in South India, the society was dominated by the temple and the so-called caste guilds. A medieval temple was not merely a religious entity, but a powerful centre of social and economic activity. It was a landlord par excellence, a large scale consumer, creator of employment for

many, patron of education and liberal arts and occasionally even functioned as a military garrison. Numerous inscriptions of the medieval period record gifts to temples by both kings and commoners. The gifts consisted of lands, tanks, duties leviable on sales and purchases, milch cattle, oxen, sheep, goats, and trusts for the perpetual maintenance of lamps etc. As the riches increased, the ritual became elaborate, the temple grew in size and the management became more complex. An idea can be had of the numbers of functionaries by reference to certain donations to the Nagesvarasvami temple, Chebrolu, which were placed under the custody of the *sthanapati*, three hundred ayyalu, and three hundred sanis. Besides the administrative (*sthanapati*, *bhandari* etc.) and the ritualistic (*archakas*, *paricharakas*) functionaries, the major temple establishments consisted of a host of musicians, dancers, potters, washermen, braziers, carpenters and goldsmiths.[45]

The basic division of the society as usual was into the four traditional castes. But, the different professional groups already functioning as self-governing units led to further diversification of the society in the form of sub-castes or jatis. For instance the Brahmins were divided into two major sects- *vaidikas* and *niyogis*, the former devoted to Vedic learning, while the latter distinguished themselves in state service as ministers, *durgadhipatis*, (in charge of forts) *dandanayakas*,(Commander) *rayasams* (writers) etc. Although there are references to terms like niyogika-vallabha in the Eastern Chalukya

inscriptions of 8th century C.E., the term niyogi does not appear to have attained a sectarian significance before the 13th century. We have inscriptional references to show that the V*aidika* Brahmins of the medieval period organised themselves as self- governing units called *mahajanalu*, each with its own administrative assembly. Understandably, the *agrahara* villages functioned as corporate entities and provided from among themselves the necessary administrative machinery in the form of assemblies. But inscriptions also attest to the functioning of *Caidi* Brahmins as distinctive sectarian units in villages other than *agraharas*. Although inscriptional evidence is by no means clear, to a certain extent the same is true of *karanalu*, a synonym of *niyogi* Brahmins.[46]

Apart from Brahmins, other vocational groups as well of the medieval times formed themselves into self-governing corporate units well-known among these are the *panchanamvaru* corporation of artisans, *virabhalanjas* confederation of trading units *teliki-veraru* corporation of oil-mongers with headquarters at Bezawada and *nakaramu* corporation of Vaisya trading community with headquarters at Penugonda in the West Godavari District. These corporate units were similar to the ancient guilds, but vastly more complex in organisational set up and had powers of social and economic regulation over their members. They strove to preserve their integrity and social identification by enunciating a *samaya dharma* - code of conduct which the members were zealously enjoined to follow. The *samaya dharma*

prescribes a particular deity for worship and firm attachment to a particular *sthala* (place) which the community believed was their original home. The learned commentator Vijnanesvara rules that the injunctions of the corporate bodies have as much legal sanction as the laws of a ruler provided they do not come into clash with the established traditions of the land.[47]

Some of these communities, especially the V*irabhalanjas*, *Vaishyas* and the *teliki* grew so rich that the kings had to respect and acknowledge their wealth and social importance. They demanded and obtained from kings certain social honours like privileges to use five musical instruments, possess a banner, even wear a crown studded with diamonds and ride on a golden palanquin. If a chief of the *veerabhalanja* community or *nagaramu* went on tour, he enjoyed the privilege of being received by local authorities and presented with betel leaves, food, dress etc. While the rulers courted the mercantile and artisan communities for their support, the latter in turn served the rulers for their own well being. From the *prasasti* (grant or record) of the *telikis*, we learn that they were the mainstay of the Chalukyan kingdom (*Chalukyamulastambhayamanulu*).[48]

As shown above, profession was a basis for social subdivision even in medieval Andhra. And yet another basis was of territorial origin. Each of the four traditional castes subdivided itself into compact groups formed after the geo-political units of the Andhra country. The sub-sects among the Brahmins -

the *Veginadus*, *VeIandus*, *Kammanadus*, *Pakanadus*, *Mulikinidus*, *Telaganyas* etc., are a precise example for social exclusiveness based on territorial considerations. Terms like *Kammakulaja* (Brahmin of Kammanadu), Kamma-komati (Vaisya of Kammanadu), *Pantakapu* (sudra of Pantarashtra) are a frequent occurrence in inscriptions and literature.[49]

With the society divided into a number of self-functioning units, the state had only very little responsibility in the form of social regulation. In the political atmosphere of the medieval times surcharged with strife and uncertainty, self-regulating social units were perhaps the best stratagem that the Andhras could devise for the smooth functioning, of the social system.

Villages differed in terms of ownership of the village land. Villages where the land was collectively held by all were known as *samudayikagramas* and those with private holdings were called *varapattugramas*. Villages given over tax free to officers in reward for state service were known as *umbalikas* and if such were granted to Brahmins devoted to Vedic studies, they became *agraharas*. The villages had each of them consisted of a number of servants (*ayagars* or *gramabhatas*) to look after the needs and protection of the villagers. The remuneration for the *ayagars* was in the form of land grants called *bhatavrittimanyams*. The *purohita* advised the villagers on auspicious moments, significance of omens and such other matters. There were also

washermen, barbers, goldsmiths, carpenters, blacksmiths, potters to attend to the needs of the village community.[50]

The above survey purports to present the growing complexity of the social institutions in Andhra during, the period under survey into a socially undivided community that the Andhras had been in pre Aryan times, hierarchical grouping based' on occupational differences was ushered in by the Aryans as on attendant measure of urbanism. But the influence of new-religious and ethnic elements in pre and early Christian times tended to weaken the Vedic fold but only for a time, till the Vedic religion revived and worked up its way to regain the position of preeminence. Soon, however, the stage was set for another social split based on occupational specialisation within each caste group. These new social sub-divisions did not show up fully in crystallised form till after 12th century A.D. The changes visualised were all processual and subtle and happened on a plane outside the sphere of state action.

Caste System in Ancient Karnataka

The Caste or Chaturvarna system developed in northern India has little evidence in Karnataka or South India in its earlier times. It was only under the Shatavahanas that it came to evidence by the importance they attached to it. "R.S Sharma" holds that "….... the shatavahanas were one of the earliest

Deccan dynasties to be Brahmanaised (aryanised). As new converts they came forward as the zealous champions of the *varna* system"[51]

Literary sources and inscriptions, while explaining the social act up in ancient Karnataka speak of 18 traditional castes (*hadinentu jati* or *samaya* or *ashtadasha prakriti*). The earliest reference to this is an epigraph from Lakshrneshwar (Dharwad district) of the Badami Chalukyas (8th century C.E.) Vachanakaras of the 12th century like Soddala Bacharasa, Madara Chennayya and Jedara Dasimayya also speak of these 18 castes. Mostly the four varnas spoken of in Vedic tradition and some other 14 castes are mentioned while identifying these castes in some of the literary works. But at a later date (in a 17th century work) the Lingayats are also mentioned as one of these castes.[52]

Though the division of society on the basis of *varnas* was introduced in Karnataka after Aryanisation which started from about 600 BCE caste differences do not appear to be the legacy of Aryanisation alone. Some class or group of even among the least aryanised, considering itself as superior or inferior to some other shows that social differences existed even earlier to aryanisation. Many of the castes in Karnataka are tribal in origin and they have nothing to do with the classification introduced by *varna* system.[53]

Among the 18 castes, Brahmanaas are mentioned superior in the hierarchy and they were found engaged in priestly and academic pursuits.

Most of them lived in the *agraharas* or settlements provided for them by a rich donor like a king. They were expected to engage themselves in *shatkarmas* or six-fold duties, viz., *yajnya* (performing sacrifice as a priest), *yajana* (sponsoring sacrifice), adhyayana (engaging in academic pursuits) *adhyapana* (teaching), *daana* (donating) and *prateegraha* (accepting donation).[54] But there were Brahmanaas who took to the career of warriors, as its the case at Mayurasharma the founder of the Kadamba dynasty.[55] They are referred as '*Bhuvanakkaaradhyaviprottamakulatilakam*' in inscriptions.[56]

A definite exclusive caste of Kshatriyas in does not appear to have existed ancient Karnataka. Any successful soldier who could have crowned himself was dubbed as Kshatriya, as discussed about Mayurasharma above, Chalukyas appear to be originally an agricultural people as indicated by their family name Chalukya described as being derived from *salike* (an agricultural implement), and the Rashtrakutas having a plough engraved prominently on many of their records indicate their origin as tillers. The Hoysalas were 'Malepas' (hill chieftains) from the ghat region and the founders of Vijayanagar are described as Kurubas.[57]

The next caste, Vaishyas, was also a loose group when all people following the profession of traders is taken into account in ancient Karnataka. Though there was a small group belonging to the Vaishya caste, there also existed castes calling themselves as *Banajigas*, *Balijas* or *Balanjus*.

Inscriptions speak also of the *Veera Balanju* their guilds, especially Aihole-500 (Avyavole-Ainurvar) and they being followers of gudda shastra, the meaning of which is not clear. All *Banajigas* were not the followers of the Vedic religion and there Jainas and *Veerashaiva Banajigas* too. But considerable section Brahamanas too were engaged in trade, and trade in vegetables, flowers, etc., was hardly in the hands of traditional Vaishyas. Sixteen *settis* of eight *nads* such as *gaveras*, *gatrigas*, *settis*, *settiguttas*, *ankakaras*, *biras*, *biravanijas*, *gandigas*, *gavundas* and *gavundaswamis* are also mentioned in inscriptions.[58]

But a later literary works speak of the Vokkaligas as a separate caste. Among the other castes mentioned in the traditional list are the *panchalas* (the smiths, sculptors and carpenters), the *Agasa* (washerman), the *Navida* (barber), the *Jeda* or *Deva* (weaver), the *Chippiga* (tailor), the *Telliga* (oil monger), the *Kumbhar* (potter), the *Mochchiga* (shoe-maker), the *Meda* (Basket-maker, the *Golla* (cowherd), the *Tambuliga* (betel-leave seller), the *Domba* (acrobat), the *Uppara* (mason) and the *Holeya*. This list of 18 castes is known from certain literary sources, but some other sources give a few other new castes to the exclusion of a few mentioned here. This was only a traditional concept and castes were definitely not only 18 in number. The present belief of superiority of some caste over the other is very much inherited from ancient times. Untouchahility too prevailed, and inscriptions speak of the residences of the *Holeyas* being outside the village or town.[59]

The kings considered it their duty to protect the caste rules. They helped to enforce them. They called themselves as “Protectors of Varnashrama Dharma”. It was this responsibility which forced Kalachuri king Bijjala to punish by death sentence the parents of a couple who were married transgressing the ban on inter-caste marriage during the 12th century.[60]

Caste in other region

Caste system has occurred after the migration of the Aryans, mobility defiance have been reported in historical researches. Sharma, opines concepts, frame work and paradigmics are being challenged and resisted. The historicity of the caste system, according to him, brings to light innumerable adaptations and contradictions faced by it. Dutta in his book, “Origin and growth of caste system in India” tried to present a history of the development of caste institutions through various influences and under various circumstances from the nebular stage to their present state. In Buddhist literature too the enumeration of the four castes was headed by the Kshatriyas. Buddhism and Jainism encouraged the virtues of honesty frugality and non-injury. But generally Brahmins opposed these emerging sects. They developed into popular reform movements though in origin both were Kshatriya movements representing the conflict between the ruling class and priests. These reforms movement took root in Maghadha and Kosala. But the focus of civilization had shifted eastwards, i.e., outside the earlier area of

Brahminic culture. Next Chandhragupta Maurya usurped the throne in 321 B.C. he was also Shudra but his mentor and guide was a Brahmin called Kautilya. Megasthanese states about the account of the institution of caste in Indika. In his Indika he speaks about seven castes age was facing internal restriction as well as external opposition from heterodox sects. The three castes, dwijas were therotically more privileged than the Shudras and the out castes. But Vaishyas though technically dwijas, did not benefit from their privileged status like the first two castes. Pantanjali the great grammarion who lived about 50 B.C. according to him there were at least five recognised varities of Shudras. First, there were shakas and the Yavanas, who resided outside Aryavartha, the home of the Aryans, secondly the Chandalas and the Doms who resided within the limits of towns and villages of Aryavarta. [61]

The Sungas were followed by the Kanvas who were also Brahmanas. The earlier of the law codes or Dharma Shastras, namely the Manava Dhama Shastra or the Manu Smriti, was written in the period of the Kanvas. Later Shakas followed Buddhism. Evidently, Brahmanaism due tits rigidity, was loosing of the support of the rich and the powerful. Increasing prosperity of the Vaishyas was another challenge to the Brahmin theorists. In Manu Smriti, the four Varnas/caste, sub-castes are precisely defined. In 30 B.C, Kanvas were swept by the Shatavahanas of the Deccan. The Shatavahanas too supported the Brahmin themselves. The Shakas, the Parthians and the author of Manava Dharma Shastra as degraded Khastriyas or as warrior class in Hindu

society. The Vedic rituals were something new for the peninsular India and were brought south of the Vindhyas by the immigrant Brahmin's of the north. First century B.C marked the beginning of the period when the communities of the south at the caste of their personal religion. An effort was also made to extend the social status group system in order to give ascendance to Brahmins. The Bhagwad Gita says the new philosophy of caste, says that individual salvation is done, through the performance of duty alone. It also says there is no hope for Salvation of shudras and the Vaishyas. Thus the status of the shudras improved during Mauryan's. The Guptas who ruled from 300 A.D to 500 A.D could not asses the same degree of the state control on the society. The Gupta, firmly established the high status of the Brahmins. The Guptas who were originally Vaishyas who were accepted as Kshatriyas by the Brahmins and in reture they were gifted with land. In Gupta's and as in the reign of Harshavardhana, the relationship between castes and occupation was maintained, which had been formulated in social and legal code.

Similarly, kings of foreign races like Yavanas, Saka and Kushana did not belong to any caste. . Shudras in this period, were permitted to become traders, artisans and agriculturist. Ghurye says that this is the improvement in the status of the shudras. The Gupta period did not witness any improvement in the status of the out castes i.e., the Chandalas and Dom were already living outside the town limits. The Pallavas of Kanchi who ruled from fourth to ninth century A.D encouraged the growth of Aryan institutions in the south. The

Pallavas period saw the culmination of what had been a gradual process of assimilating Aryan institution greater assimilations of Aryan ideas being limited to upper strata of society. The system of caste was based on birth whereas ancient south Indians knew only classes and not castes.

The Nayars of kerala, the Reddis of Mysore and Andhra, the Chettis and Vellalas of Tamil Nadu had offered spirtted resistance for a long time to the process of social and cultureal conquest. In north India, many castes were grouped under Kshatriyas and Vaishyas from early times. But in Bengal and in south India, mainly Brahmins and Shudras were found to the exclusion of intermediatry castes. In the Malabar coast, the Nambudri Brahmins who claimed to be the descendents of the pure Rig Vedic Brahmins were patronged by the Pallava kings, Shankracharya's philosophy, Advaita closely resembled those of the Buddhists and it succeded in wipening out the chanllenges put forward by Buddhism, such devotional culture resisted the Aryanisation of southern India.[62] But from seventh to tenth C.A.D. the Aryans and sermons of the Nayanars and Alvars propagated the devotional cults in which the Vedic Gods were either denied or ignored. The ancient rite such as Aswamedha tended to fall into diverse after the age of the Gupta and early Chalukyan period. Even during the times of the Chalukyan dominance of the Brahmins continued among the four divisions of the society. Thus the caste system continued to set as important system of social relations. Despite several challenges put forward by heterodox sects, the caste system could

never be eliminated. Brahminisim in one way or the other remained the religion of the multitudes and Purohit remained the nucleus of socio-religious activity in the society.

Accorinding to me caste system can be studied from three aspectices historical point of view, sociological point of view and cultural point of view. But I as a history scholar have observed from historical aspect. The caste system, the Varna system, the "Jati" system was eventually same in the ancient south Indian dynasties. Because the culture changes cannot be taken over night, it requires many years to change the system. The successing dynasties also followed the same pattern of caste system but slightly with little change or difference in it. Thus in other than Tamil regions, the caste system was followed according to the existing conditions and the existing rulers. But in all the dynasties, the dominance of the higher class is more over the week.

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CHAPTER V

THE RIGHT AND LEFT HAND DIVISIONS (*VALANGAI AND IDANGAI*)

This chapter aims at discussing the origins and development of the Right hand and Left hand divisions of the society in South India. The *nadu*, the basic territorial unit in the South Indian region, gave to the agrarian system of the Chola period a highly fragmented character, elements of this remain to this day. Cultivated land and the nexus of relationships involving land exercised a strong centripetal influence upon the structure of social relationships in South India as in other pre-industrial agrarian contexts. Added to this, however, are the distinctively regional characteristics of spatially compressed marriage, kinship, and political relationships resulting in cores of peasant settlements which were discontinuous and relatively small. These settlement units remained small and isolated until the thirteenth century in most parts of the Coromandel plain and even longer in the western uplands, assuring to the *nadu*-locality its primacy as a structural unit.

Two factors tended to offset the isolation of the nadu without diminishing its integrity. One was the network of *brahmadeyas* from whence, during the tenth to the twelfth century, emanated a general, highly aryanized culture spreading from the Coromandel plain over the entire macro region. These were powerful, corporate institutions which exercised continuous

influence for several centuries. The other was the emergence, by the eleventh century at least, of dual social divisions rooted in the numerous *nadu* societies but capable of transcending the isolation of these localities. These were potential social formations which could be activated for a variety of purposes, but which were not corporate or continuous in character. What the Brahmana settlements of the region did to foster integrative cultural bonds among dominant peasant folk within the macro region, the divisions of the 'right-hand' and 'left-hand' peoples or castes appeared to do in forging significant social links among a variety of dependent peoples of diverse localities. In both cases, cultural and social integration beyond the level of the *nadu* was the consequence although it was not until after the thirteenth century that the *nadu* began to lose some of its early primacy as the focus of society and culture in the macro region.

Labels for the dual social divisions have persisted for almost a millennium. *Valangai*, the Tamil word for 'right-hand' or 'right- side', as a social designation dates from the tenth century when contingencies of Rajaraja-I's armies, Valangai-*velaikkara-padaigal*, are mentioned.[1] During the early eleventh century, persons calling themselves Valangai, made endowments to temples as in the case of the temple at Vembarrur, alias Sri-Cholamattanda-chaturvedimangalam in Tanjavur.[2] References to groups of the 'left-hand' or 'left-side', *Idangai*, appear somewhat later; one of the earliest recorded an

affray between people of the right and left hand in 1072 C.E. This record reads in part:[3]

"….*in the second regnal year of the king (Kulottunga I) there was a clash between the right-hand and left-hand communities in which the village was burnt down, the sacred places destroyed, and the images of deities and the treasure of the temple (Mummudi-Chola-Vinnagar Alvar temple) looted*."

Thus, by the late eleventh century, there is evidence of two broad and at times hostile divisions of the population in at least some parts of the Coromandel plain; shortly it was to cover almost the whole of Tamil country. These divisions appear also to have existed in other parts of the macro region at about the same time though there is less convincing inscriptional evidence. In Southern Karnataka, the equivalent Kannada terms for right and left-hand, *balagey* and *edagey*, were used as designations for the division.[4] Other designations later used among Kannada speakers were: *desa*, for right-hand people and nadu for those of the left- hand division.[5] Among Telugu-speaking people of the macro region, slightly different designations were used. One, *kampulu* (literally 'protector' but in common usage, 'agriculturist'), appears to have had the same meaning as the terms used in Tamil country and Karnataka for the right-hand designation while the terms pahchahanamvaru and panchanulu were the same as the left-hand division elsewhere.[6] The latter term in Telugu inscriptions refers to five artisan-trader groups usually

consisting of goldsmiths, blacksmiths, braziers, and stone-and-wood sculptors, hence, pancha, or five.[7] In later centuries especially, but apparently even in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, another way of referring to the dual division among Telugu speakers was by their sectarian affiliations. Adherents to Vishnu worship, *srivaisnavas*, being the counterpart of the right division and Siva adherents allegedly corresponding to the left division.[8]

Analysis of the origins and functions of the dual divisions of peoples have posed difficult problems. Though the subject of serious scholarly speculation for almost a century,[9] the origins of the divisions remain obscure. Classical poetry contains no references to the divisions, and the terms have little, if any, contemporary currency.[10] A note on origins is appended to this chapter. It has proven just as difficult to understand the functions of the right and left divisions, for the dual divisions resist analysis according to such Chola cultural categories as caste, sect, and territorial (*nadu*) affiliation.

While each of these categories may be found at times to have been related to the dual divisions, the divisions are essentially different. Thus, ranking seems present at times, as in an inscription of 1227 CE in which newly admitted groups to the division in a part of modern South Arcot are declared ‘the eyes and the hands of the ilangai’, body images suggesting the performance of service for other members of the division. Generally, however, the divisions give the appearance of being non-ranked groupings of local

social groups. Also, while certain elements of sect organization may be seen at times in the references to an *Idangai* perceptor or a *mandapam*, the divisions are not essentially religious groupings. Finally, while the divisions have territorial focus-there being no macro region-wide divisions as such-that territory appears always to have been greater than the *nadu*.[11]

The categories of caste, sect, and territory fail to help in an understanding of the dual divisions in South India because the divisions are different from each and all, and because, at least in the early period under consideration, the scope of these three social categories was very highly localized whereas the dual divisions appear to be essentially supra-local in character. It is therefore little wonder that where the divisions have been considered as something to explain by historians, these divisions are often treated together with other, so-called, 'corporate' institutions in a modest genre of historical literature dealing with what is called, 'corporate'

But, two persistent features of the early right-left divisions militate against their dismissal as 'corporate groups' in presumed ensemble with other like groups of a caste, sectarian, or territorial in kind. One is the importance of references to the ssimi1ation of previously outside people to the left division and their alliance with other generally similar groups; the other is the military and life' or 'local government'[12]

Viewed as a ‘corporate institution’, the dual division is looked upon as guild-like organisation, or as a *sreni* i.e. a multicaste body of traders, artisans, and agriculturists. This guild conception is based upon the well-recognized association of the right division with agriculture and related activities, including trade and some processing of agricultural commodities, as well as the equally consistent association of left division groups with artisan-trader activities. The guild or *sreni* notion also fits well with the general Indian institution usually called ‘the ‘*jajmani* system’[13] **-** localized exchanges of goods and services centered on the ritual and economic dominance of agricultural patrons (jajman, Sanskrit : yajaman) and their clients. However, any essentially coopera- tive and interdependent model, whether guild/*sreni* or jajmani fails to deal with the often conflicting relations between the divisions which are attested in ‘historical records from at least the eleventh century, as noted above. Thus, some scholars, cued by conflict between the right and left divisions, have applied the term ‘faction’ following the usage of some British administrators.[14]

‘Faction’ denotes an alignment of persons for the purpose of attaining some objective in competition with others to Conflict is the business of factions, and the term fits, most aptly, certain of the activities with which the right and left divisions in South India have been associated during recent centuries certainly and possibly from a much earlier time.[15]

As sociological elements, factions have been viewed in many ways by modern scholars, though all might agree with the humorous observation of Nicholas that 'the faction is a troublesome form of social organization'.[16] Factional alignments can and have 'been relatively persistent in some societies, particularly at times of special internal strain and external stress.[17] And, however unstable they may be, factional systems can achieve some important objectives through means not usually considered appropriate and often in contravention to norms regarding conflict resolution. This would seem especially true in cultures which emphasize 'harmony and unanimity' or where 'cooperation' among social groups is given high value as it is in caste culture according to many scholars.[18] Lastly, even if factions may be evanescent, 'their component cliques and families may be stable groups'.[19] Accordingly, the dual division of social groups in the South Indian region may plausibly be seen to lend itself to analysis as factional systems even as it is recognized that there were important changes in the composition, purposes, and context in which the divisions operated in the course of perhaps eight centuries.

But, neither 'faction' nor 'guild' appear to be fully satisfactory terms for discussion of the early phase of the dual division of social groups in South India. If one were to adopt Nicholas' definition of faction-'a non corporate political conflict group, the members of which are recruited by a leader on the basis of diverse ties'[20] **-** it would be necessary to reject the term during the Chola period or at any time prior to the seventeenth century. The dual social

divisions in South India were not solely nor primarily conflict groups at this earlier time, and, while ties among each of the divisions may have been varied, the core of the interests defining each are persistent and clear. ‘Moreover, to the extent that factions may be viewed as ‘ego-centred’, essentially individual-participant ‘quasi- groups’, as Mayer has called them, the South Indian dual divisions would not qualify. The constituent units of the divisions are always localized caste groups.[21]

So as neither the concept of ‘faction’ nor ‘guild’ which have been used to describe the right and left divisions appear to fit certain of the important characteristics of the divisions, some other way of speaking about them is necessary. A recent essay about the right and left division by “Arjun Appadurai” postulates a cultural model to deal with the conflict of right and left castes, especially in Madras city during the seventeenth century where he also uses the concept of faction. However, for the Chola period, the stress upon conflict is misconceived. Conflict appears a minor aspect of the divisions during this early period however important it becomes later. To emphasize conflict between the divisions at this early period is to impose later characteristics upon the divisions of the Chola period and thus to distort an understanding of the institution in Chola times.

Most Chola inscriptions pertaining to the Valangai and Idangai do not refer to conflict, but to the typical subject matter of inscriptions: gifts to

Brahmanas and temples. From these references, we learn of various kinds of groups cooperating beyond their local bases. Among the most prominent were the *Valangai-masenai*[22] and *Idangai-masenai*:[23] the great armies of the right-hand and left-hand. Trade activities and especially relations with important itinerant trade organizations were other reasons for extra-local cooperation among locality people. Thus there are the numerous inscriptions referring to nanadesi merchants meeting together with local merchants of the *nadu* and *nagara*, i.e., merchants of ordinary agricultural villages of a locality as well as special trade settlements, including *Valangai* weavers.[24] And, there are rare Chola records of agreements by lower caste people of the *Valangai* and *Idangai* divisions, in some places at least, for resistance against 'the Brahmanaas Vellalas who hold the proprietary rights (*kani*) over the lands of the district'.[25]

The divisions thus, appear not as 'absolute' social entities, for example, as 'super castes' as suggested by the terms 'right-hand castes' and 'left-hand castes', but as 'relative' or 'potential' groupings of established local groups. Such aggregate groupings were capable of dealing with extra local problems beyond the scope and capability of existing locality institutions of the time and capable of being called into existence in response to a variety of problems, including conflicts, requiring extra-local cooperation.[26] At any time and place, the composition of right and left divisions would vary according to the exigent

condition which brought them into being, and they would lapse into latency with the passing of that condition.

Viewed as relative or potential groupings rather than as enduring corporate ones (e.g. guilds) or as ad hoc conflict groupings (i.e. factions), the dual divisions of Chola times assume an anachronistically modern appearance. That is, the *Valangai* and Idangai divisions of the Chola period appear as broad ethnic coalitions which were neither internally ranked in the manner of castes into subordinate sub-castes nor externally ranked with respect to the other bloc or division. Rather, in the manner of horizontally integrated South Indian caste associations of the recent past-the Nadars and Vanniyakula Kshatriyas- an absolute quality is claimed on the basis of birth into a named group and the ascriptive right to certain emblems and insignia. Hierarchical bases of status or moral condition are ignored. The whole or part of such large groupings are capable of acting together for certain purposes; but they do not lose their localized bases of organization and, typically, intermarriage among the constituent groups does not occur. [27]

The need for such supra-local coalitions was particularly great until well into the thirteenth century by which time urbanization provided a reliable supra-local focus at least for leading artisan trader groups, usually designated 'left-hand' people. By the same time, the widespread merging of *nadu*-localities into the *periyanadu*, or great *nadu*, provided for collaboration among

leading agrarian people- those of the right-hand on a supra-local level. Prior to the thirteenth century, however, the dual divisions, with their varied constituencies from place to place, represented perhaps the sole means by which groups other than Brahmanas and some military chiefs could on occasion transcend the borders of the *nadu*-locality.

One of the major reasons for viewing the dual divisions as 'relative' or 'potential' structural entities, rather than ones which had an absolute (i.e. 'corporate') existence in particular places is that, neither division finds mention among those groups named in the detailed Chola inscriptions dealing with matters requiring the assent of or the cooperation from important local groups. In Brahmadeya inscriptions, these local bodies inevitably include, the *nattar*; assemblies of neighboring *brahmadeyas* represented by their spokesmen (or headmen), the *brahmadeya kilavar*; assemblies of villages (*ur*) part of whose income was previously granted to support Hindu temples (devadana), Buddhist and Jaina shrines (*pallicanda*); assemblies of villages which were trade centres and under merchants' control, *nagarattar* or *nagaragalitar*; and assemblies of villages (*ur*), some portion of whose income was diverted to other forms of special purposes (*kanimuruttu* and *vettiperu*).[28] Other Chola inscriptions refer to other bodies, including *kil kalanaigal*, who are described as including carpenters (taccan), blacksmiths (kollar), goldsmiths (tattar), and koliyar (weavers?[29]).[30] Seen in these references are the various caste groups comprising the agrarian-centred division of the Valangai in Tamil country and

the mobile artisans of the Idangai, but there is no mention of these divisions themselves.

Hence, instead of using terms such as ‘faction’ or ‘guild’ to speak of the dual division, the term ‘division’ will be used. The meaning attached to the term ‘division’ is that of the occasional combination of agrarian centred groups, on the one hand, and artisan-traders on the other at levels beyond the localities in which both kinds of groups lived.

One of the most important functions of the Idangai division was the assimilation of groups to the expanding order of the Chola period. From the tenth to the thirteenth century new tracts of land not previously committed to sedentary agriculture were being brought into the expanding ambience of the Chola agrarian order. Whether by conquest or by the peaceful extension of the Chola agrarian system, people of these new tracts were brought into the dual divisions, and the groups thus included in the dual divisions might be agriculturists who had previously practiced shifting cultivation or they might be artisans or they might be any one of the various kinds of occupational groups which were not already aligned with one or the other dual divisions. In either case, the newly recruited groups could henceforth make alliance claims upon others in their division and even cause the division in any place to change from potential to actual groupings for a variety of purposes.

This process of assimilation is well exemplified in two early thirteenth century Idangai inscriptions. The first, from the Uttamacholan temple of Urrattur, fifteen miles north of the Kaveri River (Lalgitdi taluk, Tiruchirapalli), is dated A.D. 1218 and reads in part as follows[31]:

In order to kill the demons that disturbed the sacrifices of Kasyapa [the priest of Visvakarma, patron god of artisans] we were made to appear from the agni-kunda (sacrificial fire pit) and while we were thus protecting the said sacrifice, Chakravartin Arindama honoured the officiating sage priests by carrying them in a car and led them to the Brahmanaa colony (newly founded by himself). On this occasion we were made to take our seats on the back of the car and to carry the slippers and umbrellas of these sages. Eventually with these Brahmanaa sages we were made to settle down in the [same] villages. . . We received the clan name Idangai because the sages (while they got down from their cars) were supported by us on their left side. The ancestors of this our sect having lost their credentials and insignia in the jungles and bushes, we were ignorant of our origins. Having now once learnt it, we the members of the 98 sub sects enter into a compact, in the fortieth year of the king [Kulottunga III] that we shall hereafter behave like the sons of the same parents and what good and evil may befall any one of us, will be shared by all, if anything derogatory happens to the Idangai class, we shall jointly assert our rights until we establish them. It is also understood that only those who, during their congregational meetings to settle communal disputes, display the

insignia horn, bugle, and parasol shall belong to our class. Those who have to recognize us now and hereafter, in public, must do so from our distinguishing symbols- the feather of the crane and the loose hanging hair. The horn and the conch shell shall also be sounded in front of us and the bugle blown according to the fashion obtaining among the Idangai people. Those who act in contravention to these rules shall be treated as the enemies of our class. Those who behave differently from the rules (thus) prescribed for the conduct of the Idangai classes shall be excommunicated and shall not be recognized as srutiman (members of the community). They will be considered slaves of the classes opposed to us.

Another record is from Varanjuram (Vriddhachalam taluk, South Arcot) and is dated AD 1227 which reads as follows[32]:

We, the nadus (assemblies of eleven localities) having assembled at the village of Tiruvalanjuram. . . got the following resolution engraved on the Tiruvalanjuram-udaiyar temple: 'the malaiyamakkal and the nattamakkal of these nadus shall henceforth be admitted into the Idangai-talam (left hand class of men); they shall be considered the eyes and hands of the Idangai; if we violate this resolution, we shall be considered as wrong-doers to the caste.

The resolution was endorsed by Brahmanas, and other leaders of the locality as well as by those calling themselves of the *Idangai-talam* including *kaikkolars* and *saliyar* (weavers), *vanigars* (merchants) and others.[33]

These records of the thirteenth century postulate the existence of an established supra-local social entity into which new groups could be initiated. In the first inscription it is not clear who those of the lost credentials and insignia were, though the ignorance about origins and the references to the jungle suggest persons who, in other circumstances, would be low in ritual status. Those mentioned in the second inscription are more clearly identifiable and interesting cases to which reference shall be made in the proceeding pages.

A point which must be noted up first pertains to the apparent lack of emphasis upon stratified relations within either the *Idangai* or the *Valangai* division. It seems as if the divisions were homogeneous, pluralistic aggregates in which all constituent groups shared a common status and common symbols of rank. There are two ways in which this apparent homogeneity among the constituent units of the divisions is expressed. One way is in shared natural substance that is in attributes ascribed to the divisions as living things which possess unique endowed qualities arising from how they came into existence. Thus, according to a later source, the *IdangaiValangai Puranam* of CE 1692-93, both divisions were created or brought into being by the actions of gods. In one context, Siva and Indra are made responsible for the left-hand division and Brahma and a rishi (*bhrigu*, Tamil: *piruka*) for the right-hand division; in another context, the divisions are seen as the result of a disagreement between Siva, as Paramesvara, and his

consort Parvati. More specifically, the *Idangai-Valangai Puranam* assigns to each division different somatic markers. To the left division, the most important are blood, skin, and eye-balls; to the right division, bones, nerves, and brain. The other symbolic way in which the constituent units of the divisions appear to have been accorded equal status and thus to constitute a pluralistic aggregate of equivalent units, was in the common emblems each division possessed even though each constituent unit had its own emblems.[34]

In the Urratur inscription above, several insignia were given prominence. According to the *Idangai-Valangai Jatiyar Varalaru* of the Mackenzie collection, the ninety-eight castes of the right division had common emblems of the 'Brahmanai' kite (Garuda?), the half-human, half-animal form ('*purusha-mirukam*'), the elephant, ass, and eagle, while the left division had the tiger, fox, the male bird (*potu*), sword, crow, 'Brahmanai' kite, horse, lion, and a mythological animal with a face bearing features of the lion and elephant (*yali*).[35]

Thus, such shared insignia and symbols of common 'natural' attributes among units of the divisions may appear to entail 'corporateness' in the sense that castes are corporate. That is, the dual divisions may be supposed to have been something like 'super-castes' with the same quality of durable and diffused solidarity which characterized a caste. However, this would be incorrect. Rather, the divisions were groupings with quite specific elements of

solidarity, such as possessed by sectarian groups. The religious sect, with certain exceptions like the Lingayats, was comprised' of persons of many castes (though excluding the very lowest castes), but stratified interactions were irrelevant when sect votaries acted in religious contexts. Thus, in the confines of the sect centre, all sect members, regardless of their caste affiliations, interacted as equals in ritual activities.

However, differences between the twofold divisions and sects are important. The religious sect was an absolute, not relative social form. Its enduring character was *sampradaya*, a tradition passed from sectarian leader, *acharya* to disciples; its institutional base was the *matha* or sect centre. In relation to the *sampradaya* and the *matha* all laic members suspended their caste identities though such identities obviously continued. Similarly, the twofold divisions were composed of localized caste/occupational groups who interacted according to caste norms in their own localities. These norms could be altered to enable joint action with others in a broad, essentially occupational, alignment on a variety of matters. Cooperation in military ventures and in support of religious institutions is how the divisions are usually seen. These other activities must be seen as ancillary to the maintenance of occupational interests at the supralocal level and, of course, at the local level where it most counted. In disregarding caste distinctions among their constituent units, the dual divisions were not denying caste in the sense that sects did in obedience to *bhakti* principles. Religious bodies of the medieval

period often acknowledged the supernatural order prevailing at the sect temple centre by suspending the ‘natural’ order of caste relationships. For the right and left divisions it is rather that caste, whether viewed as localized ethnic groups or as ritually ranked parts of a moral order, was not salient for the supra-local, occupational functions of the divisions, at least at this early time. Thus, caste groups are mentioned, but appear to have little to do with the way in which the divisions were transformed from latency to deal with the issues they did.

The endorsement of Brahmanas and other prestigious members of local society in the Varanjuram record cited above does not clarify the matter of internal stratification of the divisions. Along with Brahrnans, referred to in that inscription as *andaiar*, there were *ekayar*, i.e. ascetics, and *niyayattars*, i.e. local persons of prominence.[36] Weavers and merchants who endorsed the resolution have the appearance of being persons of wealth, but there is no definite attribution of their superior status in the record. Since Brahmanas are outside the divisions in most accounts, the association of Brahmanas in both the inscriptions tends to confirm the equality of status that existed among the constituent castes of the divisions. It is as attendants of ‘Brahmanaa sages’ or through the endorsing function of Brahmanas that the claim of respectability and membership in one of the divisions is made and justified.[37]

The absence of references to stratified divisions within the twofold divisions does not eliminate the possibility of internal strata. For some scholars such strata appear at times to exist. References to groups like the *kaikkolar* and other weavers and merchants, who are mentioned along with Brahmanas in the endorsement, suggest this to C.S. Srinivasachari. In his pioneering work on the dual divisions he states that there were indeed strata and that the divisions reveal a process of 'low castes striving for higher social positions'.[38] Further support for this view is provided by the *nattamakkal* folk discussed in the Varanjuram inscription.

Thirty years after the date of the Varanjuram inscription cited above, the *nattamakkal* claimed for themselves the status of *pumiputtirar*, 'sons of the soil', in two inscriptions from Vengur and Tirukkoyilur, near the site of the Varanjuram record.[39] The title *pumiputtirar* is significant since it is claimed by *Vellalas*, the dominant peasants of the right division, *the Valangai*. For the *nattmakkal*, their membership in the left division but lately attained (i.e. 1227 C.E.) this, was an ambitious claim indeed! But such claims became more common later.[40] That the *nattamakkal* of modern South Arcot made this claim is supported by usage in Jaffna, northern Sri Lanka, where *nattamakkal* are called 'kings of *Vellalas* (*arusar velala*)' indicating that those migrating from what is now South Arcot to Sri Lanka during the medieval period may have carried this relatively exalted designation.[41] However, during the nineteenth century, the *nattamakkal* as well as the *malaiyamakkal* mentioned in the 1227

CE inscription were still closely linked territorially and in matrimonially.[42] This suggests that while the men from plains (*nattaman*) of this part of South Arcot might have sought to differentiate themselves from the hill folk (*malaiman*) by arrogating to themselves titles such as pumiputtirar, and by association. The *nattamakkal* remained a peasant people below the status of the *Vellala* and were often identified as part of the *Palli* caste, a peasant group incongruously of the left division.[43]

Military actions by the twofold divisions occupy a conspicuous place in the early records of the divisions and pose most sharply the question of the potential or relative character of the divisions. There are references to the ‘great army’ (*masenai*) of *Valangai* and *Idangai*, and to fighting men called *velaikkara* which comprised part of the Chola army in Sri Lanka during the late eleventh century according to a Tamil inscription at Polonnaruva.[44] Inscriptions of the middle of the eleventh century from Tiruvenkadu in Tanjavur and Tiruvallam in North Arcot also refer to grants by members of both divisions to temples, notwithstanding the fact that in other places, notably Kanchi, though perhaps not at this early time, the two divisions used different temples, halls, and dancing girls.[45]

The term *Valangai* is first mentioned in connection with military contingents under the first of the great Cholas, Rajaraja I. An analysis of Chola military organization, with the meagerness of the evidence, leads to the

conclusion that the designation *valagai* could have referred only to armed contingents raised and commanded by the dominant peasantry of the Chola heartland of Cholamandalam and Tondai-mandalam. Inscriptions from Tanjavur enumerate regiments of the army of which almost one- half (thirteen of thirty-one) were entitled *Valangai* during the time of Rajaraja-I (985-1014 CE) and Rajendra-I (1014-44 CE).[46] Other forces included household troops and troops recruited from territories on the borders of Chola country, *vadugan* from the northern Telugu tracts and *malaiyalar* from the hill borders of modern Kerala in the west.[47] These forces serving the Cholas bore the designation *velaikkarar*, and the *Valangai* were further identified by the addition to their titles of one of the many pseudonyms taken by Rajaraja and a connective word, *terinda*, (selected).[48] Thus, there was the unit called *nittavinoda-terinda-Valangai-velaikkarappadaigal*, [Nittavinoda's (Rajaraja's) select right-hand warrior regiment].[49]

The meaning of *velaikkarar* has confused the historians and it is still not clear. That it refers to warriors is clear-cut from the contexts in which it is mentioned in inscriptions and literary sources of the tenth to the twelfth centuries. Even whose soldiers they were is still at question. The central problem involving this term is whether the *velaikkarar* were special and permanent troops of the Chola overlords or whether they were enlisted for extraordinary or occasional military service as is suggested by the *velai*, one of the meanings of which is occasional (or time),[50] If they were the permanent

troops of the Chola overlords, the *Valangai* units cannot simultaneously be considered local peasant militia units. On the other hand, if the *Valangai velaikkarar* were recruited to the military adventures of the Cholas from existing military units among the peasantry controlled and led by the peasantry then the association of the *Valangai* with the peasantry would appear as strong in the early period as it is in the lists of the eighteenth century.

The prevailing view of the *velaikkarar* is stated most clearly by ""Nilakanta Sastri"". He says that they 'were the most permanent and dependable troops in the royal service…. they were ever ready to defend the king and his cause with their lives when occasion (velaï) arose'.[51] This view is supported by the editor of the Tamil Lexicon who writes, under the entry, *velaikkarar*: 'devoted servants who held themselves responsible for a particular service to their king at stated hours (*velai*) and vow to stab themselves to death if they fail in that'.[52] As evidence for this view, ""Nilakanta Sastri"" refers, with uncharacteristic vagueness, to later literary sources while the Lexicon cites the commentary of Periyavachchapillai on Nammalvar's *Tirumoli*, to the effect that these soldiers committed suicide for their king.[53]

This view of the devotion of the *velaikkarar* to their king, whom they served presumably on a permanent basis, replaced an older, less heroic, view held by the epigraphists Hultzsch, Venkayya, and Krishna Sastri. They spoke

of 'troops of servants', 'volunteers', or simply, soldiers of lower status ('working classes') who fought in Chola armies.[54] Other scholars have suggested that the *velaikarar* were mercenary troops as were others in the Chola forces.[55]

The question here is that whether these warriors, representing half of the known regiments enumerated in inscriptions of the great Cholas, could be considered a permanent force, supported from the resources of the Chola overlords or whether the Valangai velaikkarar were mobilized from among existing peasant military units for some limited purpose, and were thus an extension of the Valangai (or Idangai) as a potential social formation. The former view is congenial to that of "Nilakanta Sastri" and others who have tended to place heavy reliance upon the comprehensiveness and effectiveness of the Chola state. However, there is no evidence of the basic means of supporting a large army any more than there is for maintenance of an elaborate bureaucracy. Neither, of course, was necessary. Just as locality institutions provided most of the administrative functions required at the time, so, too, it must be supposed that the major forces involved in the wars of the Cholas were supplied from the existing organizations of the locality-based society of the time.

To the core of household troops maintained by the Cholas, who may indeed have held a special loyalty to their overlord, and some mercenary

troops from the western and northern forests, those under the control of peasant locality leaders alone, during the tenth and eleventh centuries at least, could have provided the military units under Chola command. By the twelfth century, Idangai forces were added to this pool of militarily organized folk within the macro region who could be mobilized to join the Chola kings in defensive and predatory campaigns.

The connection of the Coromandel peasantry with *Valangai* military forces is supported by an important record of the time of Kulottunga-I, 1072 CE, at Avani (in Mulbagal taluk of Kolar district) in Gangavadi. As discussed above, the claim of the dominant locality folk in this area to membership in '48,000 bhümi' of Tondaimandalam makes their identity as *Vellalas* from that adjoining territory relatively firm. The central intention of the record bears out the unmistakable peasant interests of these locally dominant folk. [56] This Kolar inscription records how various local agrarian groups were to be taxed in a locality, called the 'eighteen vishaya of Rajendra-Chola', under the control of persons identified as *Valangai* of Tondaimandalam. According to Professor "Nilakanta Sastri", this epigraph records a unilateral modification of revenue arrangements imposed upon the local peasantry by a Chola revenue administrator.[57]

The order passed by the people in control of the Avani locality, calling themselves *Valangai* of Tondaimandalam was addressed to the local ruling

groups over whom the control of Tondaimandalam soldiery had been extended by conquest at some earlier time. “Nilakanta Sastri” in his discussion of this record, has treated it as a protest ‘against unusual levies’ of a ‘self-willed and autocratic ruler or chieftain’.[58] But, the inscription is cast in quite usual terms with a laudatory preamble dedicated to the Chola ruler; it is not an apparent record of protest though it does declare that an order of the *adigargal-sola-muvendavelar* would not be followed. The *muvendavelar* referred in the inscription as having promulgated this new and inappropriate revenue regulation could of course have been an agent of the Chola overlords or perhaps a higher military officer acting on his own behalf.[59] But, it is most likely that this person was a leader of the conquering Tondaimandalam *Valangai* forces claiming to exercise the superior prerogatives of a chief. In any case, as “Nilakanta Sastri” has noted, defiance of his orders are clear: ‘ . . . there being no tax on cows and she-buffaloes since the rise of the sacred family of Cholas in the Solamandalam nadu (or) in the Jayangonda-Sola-mandalam.... no such tax should be paid in accordance with the order of the Sola-muvendavelar.....[60]

The *Idangai* or left hand division of lower social groups during the Chola period was as certainly associated with mercantile and craftsmen population as the right-hand division was with agrarian population. The core *Idangai* groups in all parts of the region were certain merchants and craftsmen conventionally expressed by the numeral ‘five’ as in the terms *panchalar*

(*panchalattar* or *panch-kammalar*) and *anjuvannam*.[61] These usually included goldsmiths, silversmiths, blacksmiths, and skilled carpenters and stone cutters. Others characteristically associated with the left division, according to evidence of the eighteenth century, were oil processers using presses operated by two or more bullocks, implying supplies of raw materials and markets which might be found in urban places. Certain weavers were also included in the division according to later evidence, though most of them were in the right division. In the case of weavers, there appears to be no particular reason for the association with the left division unless scale of operation and production for the market (rather than for a fixed clientele) was a factor for weavers as it appeared to be for oil producers.

It is possible to venture the seventeenth and eighteenth century occupational alignment of the left division backward in time. One important link is found in *rathakara* inscriptions of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Craftsmen identified as *rathakara* had enjoyed an ancient honourable status according to Vedic and later Vedic sources,[62] but by the early centuries of the Christian era they had come to be regarded as *Sudras* according to the Amarakosa.[63] Reflecting the early high status of *rathakara* in South India, a late Fourth century Pallava copperplate inscription found in the Krishna district of modern Andhra, dated in the fourteenth year of Nandivarman I, records the grant of an *agrahara* to one of the *rathakara* caste who was called a *chatuvejja*, that is, one who has studied the four Vedas.[64]

The craftsmen of later period occasionally used the rathakara designation mostly in an attempt to strengthen their claims to high status. A well known inscription of Uyyakondan-Udaiyar (Tiruchirapalli taluk) of 1118 CE records a gathering of learned Brahmanas (*bhatta*) at Rajasraya-chaturvedimangalam to consider the status of a group of craftsmen, including goldsmiths and silversmiths, carpenters, stone cutters and masons calling themselves *rathakarar*. [65] Having examined sastric authorities, the Brahmanas concluded that since rathakarar were of high and correct birth (*mahishya* and *anulöma*), [66] they were entitled to the sacred thread investiture and access to other important rituals. Another *rathakara* inscription from Alangudi, or Jananatha-chaturvedi-mangalam (Nannilam taluk, Tanjavur) of 1264 CE records an agreement among craftsmen calling themselves *rathakarar*, to raise a fund from among their number in specified localities for the construction of a pavilion in that *brahmadeya*.[67]

The fund was to be raised from a special cess, *inavari* upon craftsmen, and it was to be collected by Saivite temple functionaries, in the named localities.[68] It may safely be assumed, with the epigraphist K.V. SuBrahmanaya Aiyer, that the four classes of artisans referred to in the Alangudi inscription were *Panchalar* or *Kammalar*, the core group of the left hand division of that early time and later.[69]

Another matter of evidence linking those using the ancient *rathakarar* title with left hand division artisans of the medieval period is to be found in the identification of *rathakarar* as *kil-kalanai*, subordinate professional people,[70] who seem to have lived in separate residential quarters (*ceri*) in larger villages.[71] An inscription of 1036 CE from Chidambaram distinguishes between non-Brahmana inhabitants of superior status, *kudigal*, and those of inferior status, *kil-kalanai*.[72] The *kudigal* included two merchant groups, *sankarappadiyar* and *vyaparin*,[73] plus three groups usually associated with the right hand division: *Vellala*, *Saliyar* (cloth merchants) and *Pattinavar* (fishermen). The subordinate workmen, *kil-kalanai*, were *taccar* (carpenters), *kollar* (blacksmiths), *tattar* (goldsmiths), and *koliyar* (weavers).[74] Epigraphist Hultzsch, while discussing some inscriptions of a slightly earlier period, (1013 CE), noted the term 'kammanacheri' and hazarded that this was the residential quarter of the *kammalar*, or artisans; the propinquity of the artisans' quarters to those of the *paraiyan*, *paraicceri*, suggested the low status of the artisans.[75] Thus, whatever the high status of the *rathakarar* was in ancient times, and notwithstanding the use which craftsmen of the Chola period sought to make of this ancient status in assuming the title of *rathakarar*, they had come to be identified with middling and even poor rank in the eleventh century.

However, during the twelfth century, the status of artisans and merchants associated with the left division began to change. The Polonnaruva

(Sri Lanka) inscription of the first quarter of the twelfth century speaks of the *Idangai velaikkarar* for the first time and merchant groups later to be mentioned prominently.[76] This record strongly suggests that the *Idangai velaikkarar* were the military arm of the merchants marking the beginning of the rise to prominence of the great itinerant guilds whose military power was so conspicuous for the next two centuries.[77] At the same time, artisans of the left division began to demand and to receive privileges which marked an enhancement of their status. A series of inscriptions from the Kongu country during the late twelfth century refer to the *Kammalar* of *vengalanadu* (modern Karur taluk) who claimed for themselves the right to use the double conch and drums at times of marriages and funerals, to use footwear (ciruppu), and to cover their houses with plaster as a mark of their high status.[78] The interpretation by Dr M. Arokiaswami of these Kongu inscriptions, is that *Valangai* colonists of the region, including *Vellalas* and *Kaikkolars*, had oppressed those of the left-hand faction until the intervention of the Chola ruler, Kulottunga III was brought by the left division leaders there, the Kammalar.[79]

Similar developments were taking place in Andhra and Karnataka as well as in Tamil country. During the eleventh and twelfth centuries, merchants and artisans of Andhra attained strikingly public presence for the first time, particularly in the relatively densely settled parts of the Andhra plain called Vengi, comprising modern East Godavari, Krishna, and Guntur districts. In

these places there are numerous temple inscriptions which record gifts of merchants calling themselves, 'the lords of Punugonda' and often citing their *gotras*.[80] Wandering merchants plying extensive trade networks between Karnataka and Andhra endowed temples in these regions as well as in Tamil country. These endowments are recorded in inscriptions which extol the virtue, bravery, and dharmic pursuits of their members.[81] Artisans of Karnataka, calling themselves Vira Panchala, had formed special relationships with certain temples and seminaries (*mathas*) such as the *Airiya-kula-matha* in the Hoysala capital of Dwarasamudra (modern Halebid, Hassan district);[82] artisans of Andhra, with the name *panchanamuvaru*, were also associated with particular temples of the time and even referred to themselves as a corporate group.[83] Among the most self-consciously striving groups of the time were the oil-mongers (*teliki*) of Bezwada and its vicinity. They called themselves, 'the one-thousand', and in their records of the eleventh and twelfth centuries boast of being the hereditary servants of the Eastern Chalukya rulers of the area. According to a copperplate inscription of 1084 CE, *teliki* bridal couples were given the special right to visit the king on horseback and to obtain offerings of betel from his hand.[84]

Changes in the status of the left division people during the twelfth century were dependent upon changes in South Indian society. New importance was accorded to urban artisans and merchants as a result of the temple urbanization of the period. With that came a fundamental modification

of the position of mercantile and craft groups from that of the previous centuries when they were not only constrained to accept a subordinate place in relation to the dominant peasantry, but to suffer the indignity of a corporate status of pollution which is ineluctably associated with the left-hand.

The terms Valangai and Idangai and balagai and edagai literally mean 'right hand and left hand' in Tamil and Kannada. The Gazetteer of Mysore and Coorg give the list of them as follows[85];

A. Right Hand Caste

1.	Banajiga	Traders
2.	Vokkaliga	Cultivators
3.	Ganiga	Oilman, who yoke only one Bullock of the mill
4.	Rangare	Dyers
5.	Tada	Mahratta Traders
6.	Gujerati	Gujarat Traders
7.	Kamati	Labourers
8.	Jains	---
9.	Kuruba	Shepherds
10.	Kumbara	Potters
11.	Agasa	Washerman
12.	Besta	Fisherman
13.	Padmasale	A Class of Weavers

14.	Nainda	Barbera.
15.	Uppara	Salt makers
16.	Chitragara	Painters
17.	Golla	Cowherds
18.	Holeya	The Lowest Right hand Caste

B. Left hand Caste

1.	Panchala Comprising	
2.	Badiga	Carpenters
3.	Kanchagara	Copper or Brass Smiths
4.	Lohara	Iron smith
5.	Waddar	Stone Massons
6.	Akasala	Gold smith
7.	Bheri	A Class of Nagarta Traders
8.	Devanga	Weavers
9.	Hegganiga	Oilmen, who yoke two bullocks to the mill
10.	Golla/ Dhanapala	Cowherds
11.	Beda	Hunters
12.	Yakula/Koreya	Cultivators
13.	Palli/Tigla -----	
14.	Madiga	The Lowest Left hand Caste.

The Banijiga Caste led the whole party of Right hand class, whereas the Panchalas commanded the whole party of the left hand classes. The Holeyaru were the warrior group for the Right side castes and the Madigaru were the most active combatants in all disputes among the two divisions.

A few inscriptions state that each group constited of 98 sub sescts. Perhaps, the 98 sects were subdivisions of these 18 castes.

Most of the scholars opine that the list differs from place to place. Interestingly Brahamanas, Kshatriyas and the greater part of the Shudras take no share in the dispute of the rival and they are not included in this list also.[86]

Different explanations have been presented for the left-and right- hand designations. "Macleane's" suggested that the 'hands' imagery arose from the fact of five artisan groups of the left division, the *panchalar* or Kammalar, as opposed to five non artisan castes i.e. as fingers on a hand. This is clearly unacceptable, for the number here, 'five', is as conventional as the number 'ninety eight' which is used for each division in many of the sources.[87] The more usual explanations about the right and left hand are positional: people of the Valangai being on the right-hand side of gods, sages, Brahmanas, or kings in some legendary context in which status was determined.[88] "G. Oppert" appears to have been the first to notice the implication of ritual pollution in the right-and left-hand division. He attributed the dual division with

its pollution implications to the conflict between Jainas and Hindus during the pre-Pallavan period, in this connection, Oppert stated 'The influence of Jains was perhaps strongest in the towns where artisan classes form an important portion of the population, while the Brahmanas appealed to the land owning and agricultural classes.'[89]

While Brahmanas remained neutral with respect to the divisions, Jainas were apparently associated with the left-hand division, *edagai*, in Karnataka until 1368 CE when the Vijayanagar ruler, Bukka Raya, intervened in a dispute involving Vaishnavas and Jainas over sect emblems and decreed that Jainas were to be considered members of the right-hand division.[90] As advocated above in the discussion of the Pallava period, the nominally religious conflict which was bitterly carried out during that early period was based upon important ideological factors. Under the Pallavas and their peasant and Brahmana supporters, Jainism was treated as a dangerous error, and association with Jaina teachers and institutions polluting. Oppert pointed to a similar orientation of the Chola rulers toward the Jainas and the Jainas supporting Hoysalas.[91]

Regarding the disgrace of pollution which was attached to the left hand, it is to be wondered that those of the *Idangai* would have acquiesced in the title. It is clear from the Urrattur inscriptions cited above and numerous other inscriptional and literary documents of the *Idangai* which are to be found in all

parts of the region. There are numerous references to regular local dues collected from the left-hand people as *Idangaivari* as well as subscriptions collected from and on behalf of the division, the *Idangai-magamai*.[92] During the earliest period for which there are records, it appears that the *Idangai* occupied an inferior and perhaps despised position among people of the region. Later, in the twelfth century and after, when *Idangai* groups undertook to alter their positions with respect to the dominant peasant population, they continued to identify themselves by the *Idangai* title notwithstanding that this title might have originally been a sign of their degraded status in the society of the macro region. The title was retained until the nineteenth century in most places.

Apart from "Oppert" and "Arjun Appadurai", few modern commentators on the right-left divisions in South Indian society recognize the signification of impurity or pollution which accompanies left symbolism;[93] none of these including these two addresses the question of why those of the left division accepted its derogatory designation. "Appadurai notes", 'As in other cultural systems, the left hand in South India has connotations of impurity whereas the right hand has powerful and positive normative associations…'[94] Where "Oppert" explains the designation as originating in the success of the Brahmana led Hinduism of agriculturists over the 'heretical' Jaina artisans and merchants of pre-Pallavan trade centres, he does not ask why the presumed denigrating 'left' title persisted and especially, why those of the left

division continued to use it in their own records later on. Nor does "Appadurai's" thoughtful and bold explanation of the division as a 'root paradigm' of conflict[95] allow us to understand finally why if, as he says, the left hand connotes impurity, those of the *Idangai* use that title.

A potential explanation of this puzzling phenomenon is that the utility of the *Idangai* title as a well established symbol of identity outweighed for its users of the Chola period and later any stigma which might have attached to the title from an earlier time. It is after all not only in the labels which are affixed upon or chosen by a group that basic significance in here is, for new myths can be made to offset older meanings. The capacity of ethnic labels to serve as symbols of identity and mobilization-whatever the origin of the labels and their possibly once derogatory connotations-explains as well as any reason why the title 'left' or 'left-hand' continued to be used by a substantial number of South Indians even after the twelfth century when those using the title found impressive new opportunities and importance.

Why this problem is selected

The "Caste System" in ancient south India is one of the interesting and challenging topic. It is very tempting to know how caste root has evolved in size, shape and colour, since the beginning of the civilizations and the migration of the Aryans and Sankritization of the Aryans. Till today also it is one of the burning topic we can say. The changes that occurred in the north

and south due to caste system. The caste concept is closely related with the social term, cultural term and historical term. It depends on one how he views about this problem. In the earliest the caste system was not at all considered it as problem. Each and every individual carried their order in the society. But later before the British after they stepping out of India this problem rised to a greater extent. Many reforms, movements were taken against it. The perspective of historians varies from person to person about the caste system. The reason for selecting such a problem is that, even till today the caste system is existing at the bottom level or the village level. Though many acts have been implemented in the constitution, still this heneous act is present in the village level. They are denied of their basic rights such as entry into the temples, going to the shed hotels, drawing water from the wells, keeping distance from the higher caste people. For instance Dr. B.R Ambedkar has done voluminous work on caste system. He condemned the Hindu philosophy and took the stand against the Hinduism. He also said that practising of untouchability is a serious crime, but thanks to the lead taken by the social reformers, religious reformers, thinkers and philosophers. They awakened the minds of the ignorant and fought for their rights and justice. The ultimate solution to this problem right now is that each and every individual should think in a positive way irrespective of any caste, colour, creed and race. The attitude of each and every human beings should change for the betterment of the society and community.

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CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

India is known for more than its traditional fashions we perceive today. There is more to its mere modern society. India is an ancient city with a very captivating background. From social, religious, to historical aspects, ancient India has been created on a foundation that stands strong in its beliefs. There were countless steps taken in order to instill a value in its large society.

South India as considered here is a complex, composite region consisting of diverse physical, social, and cultural components. Definition of its distinguishing characteristics constitutes a crucial and, often, difficult problem. To a large extent, the difficulty is conceptual. That is, delimiting the distribution of some element or related elements which distinguish one segment of the time-space continuum from another requires both adequate and relevant distinguishing elements chosen to constitute the region. The adequacy or relevance of the elements according to which a region is defined are related to and are alone justified by the problem at hand.

The term 'South India' has been used at times to designate the entire peninsula, but that is not its meaning here. In this study, 'South India' refers generally to that portion of peninsular India South of the Karnataka watershed on the west, and the Kistna-Godavari delta on the east. Within this portion of

the peninsula, there has existed a region characterized by a high degree of sharing of significant social, cultural, and political elements and an order of interaction such as to constitute a viable unit for the study of certain problems.

It includes most of what has been called the ‘Dravidian culture sphere’ following the linguistic usage first suggested by Francis W. Ellis in 1816 to describe a family of languages in the Southern peninsula. Spate employs the term ‘Dravidian South’ to refer to this part of the sub-continent and sees it as consisting of a group of ‘perennial nuclear regions’ of which he lists: Kalinga country or Orissa, Andhra or Telugu country, Chola and Pandya parts of Tamil country, and the isolated South-western littoral of Kerala or Malabar. In social terms the Southern peninsula has also been recognized as distinctive. Irawati Karve delineates a separate Southern zone of kinship organization which includes Karnataka, Andhra, Tamilnadu, and Kerala. Hence the present study is limited to the zone suggested by Irawati.

A majority of Indians from the Southern region speak one of the Dravidian languages: Kannada, Malayalam, Tamil, Telugu, Tulu, and Kodava. During its history, a number of dynastic kingdoms ruled over parts of South India whose invasions across Southern and Southeastern Asia impacted the history and cultures of modern sovereign states such as Sri Lanka, Singapore, the Philippines, Indonesia, Thailand and Malaysia.

The history of the Southern part of India covers a span of over four thousand years during which the region saw the rise and fall of a number of dynasties and empires. The period of known history of the region begins with the Iron age (1200 BCE to 24 BCE) period during which Chera, Chola, Pandya ruled the South Indian country until 14th century C.E. Other dynasties of Shatavahana, Chalukya, Pallava, Rashtrakuta, Kakatiya and Hoysala were at their peak during various periods of history. These kingdoms constantly fought amongst each other and against external forces when Muslim armies invaded South India. Vijayanagara empire rose in response to the Muslim intervention and covered the most of South India and acted as a bulwark against Muslim expansion into the South.

India is an ancient country with a very captivating background. From social, religious, to historical aspects, ancient India has been created on a foundation that stands strong in its beliefs. There were countless steps taken in order to instill a value in its large society. History and religion play the most important role in doing so. Having a powerful structure will insure any society of their chance at gaining an advantage in understanding the value of the society's beliefs. This has allowed the caste system to stamp its position in India's ancient history. The caste system is a division of society based on differences of wealth, inherited rank or privilege, profession, occupation, or race. As we uncover the numerous explanations of why society is in its present condition, we will gain a detailed understanding of its many

influences. While referring to the Rig Veda and Aryan influence, it is evident that the Hindu creation myth has helped established society’s caste system. The influence of Aryans around 1500 B.C.E. in the Indian society influenced the Indian caste system drastically. The Aryans had a system of cosmic and social order.

When the Aryans arrived in India they began conquering and taking control over regions in north India and at the same time pushed the local people Southwards or towards the jungles and mountains in north India. This prompted the society to create a system of class. As the influence of a class system hardened in Ancient India, the idea of varna’s had become so deeply embedded in the Indian mind that its terminology was even used, for the classification of precious commodities. There were four main class levels or Varna’s in the caste system, Brahmanas, Kshatrias, Vaishias, and Sundras. According to the religious aspect of the ancient period each level of class was created from each body part of Purush. The Aryan’s distinguished different classes and brought attention to a system known as the caste system.

During the Pallavas there seems to have been a vast influx of Brahmins from north India. Groups of Brahmins were welcomed and settled in different villages and were helped by generous grants of land and gifts. Several *ghatikas* or sacred schools of learning under the patronage of Brahmins were established in the Pallava and Pandya territories.This was

also the time when numerous temples of stone were erected. And it need hardly be repeated that the temples were the citadels of the orthodox caste system and the supremacy of the Brahmin hierarchy. In the religious and social spheres the supremacy of the Brahmins was established. The kings patronised the Brahmins and supported them in their move for exalting Brahmins. Around the temples there appeared settlements of *agraharas* containing the residences for scholars devoted to the study and teaching of the Vedas. The rules prescribing the privileges of the various castes with reference particularly to the temples were formulated. It is well known that Mahendravarman II professed himself to be the champion of the *varnashrama-dharma.* Pallava rulers, in general, are said to have enforced the special rules of all castes and orders. With the systematisation of the four castes, their duties and rights, the tendency for the growth of sub-castes appeared. In particular, numerous small groups appeared among the Sudras; Intermarriages among them were not allowed.

The age of the Great Pallavas marked the heyday of the Bhakti Movement in Taniilnadu. This encouraged devotion to temples and rituals. Among the 63 Nyanmars, besides Brahmins and Arasar, there were Vanigar, Vellalas, Idaiyar, Kuyavar, Panar, Vedar, Sanar, Saliyar, Sekkár (Oil monger), Vannar (washer man) and Pulaiyar. Among the Alavars of about the same epoch, along with Brahniins, Kshatriyas, Vellalas and Majavas, there were some like Tondaradippodi, Tiruppan-alvar, not born in any of the four

principal castes. It is significant that Tirumalisaiyar, though of a high caste, states in one of his hymns that he did not belong to any caste.

During the period of the Imperial Cholas the social disparities which had appeared in the earlier epoch of the Pallavas continued in an accentuated form. Temples increased, and with them the rituals and ceremonies in temples increased. Caste regulations in respect of temples became rigorous. Untouchability and unapproachability developed. The number of sub-castes multiplied. New brahmadeyas appeared, and more Brahmins from the north were invited to settle down in new villages. *Ghatikas* and Vedic centres of learning increased in number. The same social setup continued in the 16th-17th centuries. During this period when the Vijayanagara empire expanded into the Tamil country, several new-castes appeared on account of the inflow of Telugu and Kannadiga settlers in the Tamil country.

The Andhras as a, tribe or cultural entity, existed, in the Brahmanaical period. In the *Aitaraya Brahmanaa*, they were listed as a non-Aryan tribe along with others such as Pundras, Savaras, Pulindas and Mutibas. From very early times, it appears that the Andhras have been occupying the lower courses of the Godavari and the Krishna together with the adjoining areas. It is not clearly known when the Andhras passed into the fold of Aryan culture but it must have happened long before the foundation of the Mauryan empire. Aryanisation must have brought with it Vedic ritualism and caste system into

this non-Aryan tribal society. Apastambha, one of the sutrakaras is believed to have sailed from Andhra-desa. The society shed off its tribal character, was reconstructed and given a new shape - a shape cast in the Aryan mould. In the new set up, each of the four traditional classes had clearly defined roles to fulfill, in which that of a Kshatriya was to protect and rule. Surely, the essentials of an urban society - institutionalised social inequalities, division of labour, social surplus, and at least a rudimentary form of government were satisfied.

Society of the Shatavahana period was less homogeneous than before, the influx of new religious and racial elements having contributed to this effect. One of the effects of the Mauryan rule was the steady infiltration of the two faiths-Jainism and Buddhism into the Deccan. Of the two, the latter was more active and commanded a larger following. The new religions received liberal patronage from both kings and commoners. Inscriptions of the Shatavahana times speak of *halikas* (cultivators), *kularikas* (potters), *kolikas* (weavers), *kamaras* (smiths), *kasakaras* (braziers), *vasakaras* (bamboo-workers), *tilapisakas* (oil-mongers), *vadhakis* (carpenters) *sethis* (merchants), *odayantrikas*, (boatmen) etc. It appears that these professions were not the monopoly of one particular caste, although according to Vedic injunction Vaisyas were to be the tradesmen of the society. We hear from inscriptions of the instance of a Kshatriya who took up the mercantile profession. The Stavahanas were Brahmins by caste but became a ruling family.

With the end of the Shatavahana rule, perhaps, passed the meridian of the glory of Buddhism in Andhra. A powerful revival of Brahmanaism was the keynote of the society in Andhra ever since 3rd century CE. Vasishthiputra Siri Chantamula's performance of Vedic sacrifices like *Ashvamedha*, *Agnisthoma* and *Vajapeya* signalised this change in the religious outlook of the people. Many of the copper-plate inscriptions of the post-Satavhana and of the astern Chalukyan times were records of gifts of lands and villages to the learned members of the community (Brahamins) so that they might devote themselves to the performance of the Six traditional karmas-*yajna*, *yajana*, *adhyayana*, *adhyapana*, *dana* and *pratigrahana* enjoined upon them. In course of time, these vocational groups crystallized as so many sub-castes or jatis, which were a constituent element of the society in medieval Andhra.

In Andhra, as elsewhere in South India, the society was dominated by the temple and the so-called caste guilds. A medieval temple was not merely a religious entity, but a powerful centre of social and economic activity. Apart from Brahmins, other vocational groups as well of the medieval times formed themselves into self-governing corporate units well-known among these are the *panchanamvaru* corporation of artisans, *virabhalanjas* confederation of trading units *teliki-veraru* corporation of oil-mongers with headquarters at Bezawada and *nakaramu* corporation of Vaisya trading community with headquarters at Penugonda in the West Godavari District. Some of these communities, especially the *virabhalanjas*, *vaisyas* and the *teliki* grew so rich

that the kings had to respect and acknowledge their wealth and social importance. With the society divided into a number of self-functioning units, the state had only very little responsibility in the form of social regulation.

Villages differed in terms of society, villages given over tax free to officers in reward for state service were known as *umbalikas* and if such were granted to Brahmins devoted to Vedic studies, they became *agraharas.* The *purohita* advised the villagers on auspicious moments, significance of omens and such other matters. There were also washermen, barbers, goldsmiths, carpenters, blacksmiths, potters to attend to the needs of the village community. The influence of new-religious and ethnic elements in pre and early Christian times tended to weaken the Vedic fold but only for a time, till the Vedic religion revived and worked up its way to regain the position of preeminence. Soon, however, the stage was set for another social split based on occupational specialisation within each caste group. These new social sub-divisions did not show up fully in crystallised form till after 12th century CE. The changes visualised were all processual and subtle and happened on a plane outside the sphere of state action.

The Caste or Chaturvarna system developed in northern India has little evidence in Karnataka or South India in its earlier times. Literary sources and inscriptions, while explaining the social act up in ancient Karnataka speak of 18 traditional castes (*hadinentu jati* or *samaya* or *ashtadasha prakriti*). Mostly

the four varnas spoken of in Vedic tradition and some other 14 castes are mentioned while identifying these castes in some of the literary works. But at a later date (in a 17th century work) the Lingayats are also mentioned as one of these castes. Though the division of society on the basis of *varnas* was introduced in Karnataka after Aryanisation which started from about 600 BCE caste differences do not appear to be the legacy of Aryanisation alone. Some class or group of even among the least aryanised, considering itself as superior or inferior to some other shows that social differences existed even earlier to aryanisation. Many of the castes in Karnataka are tribal in origin and they have nothing to do with the classification introduced by *varna* system. Among the 18 castes, Brahmanaas are mentioned superior in the hierarchy and they were found engaged in priestly and academic pursuits. They were expected to engage themselves in *shatkarmas* or six-fold duties, viz., *yajnya* (performing sacrifice as a priest), *yajana* (sponsoring sacrifice), adhyayana (engaging in academic pursuits) *adhyapana* (teaching), *daana* (donating) and *prateegraha* (accepting donation). But there were Brahmanaas who took to the career of warriors, as its the case at Mayurasharma the founder of the Kadamba dynasty. They are referred as '*Bhuvanakkaaradhyaviprottamakula-tilakam*' in inscriptions. A definite exclusive caste of Kshatriyas in does not appear to have existed ancient Karnataka. Any successful soldier who could have crowned himself was dubbed as Kshatriya. The next caste, Vaishyas, was also a loose group when all people following the profession of traders is

taken into account in ancient Karnataka. Though there was a small group belonging to the Vaishya caste, there also existed castes calling themselves as *Banajigas*, *Balijas* or *Balanjus*. Inscriptions speak also of the *Veera Balanju* their guilds. later literary works speak of the Vokkaligas as a separate caste. Among the other castes mentioned in the traditional list are the *panchalas* (the smiths, sculptors and carpenters), the *Agasa* (washerman), the *Navida* (barber), the *Jeda* or *Deva* (weaver), the *Chippiga* (tailor), the *Telliga* (oil monger), the *Kumbhar* (potter), the *Mochchiga* (shoe-maker), the *Meda* (Basket-maker, the *Golla* (cowherd), the *Tambuliga* (betel-leave seller), the *Domba* (acrobat), the *Uppara* (mason) and the *Holeya*. Untouchahility too prevailed, and inscriptions speak of the residences of the *Holeyas* being outside the village or town. The kings considered it their duty to protect the caste rules, they called themselves as “Protectors of Varnashrama Dharma”.

Discussion of the right and left divisions during the Chola period has been shaped by the necessity of examining the fragmentary evidence of this early period in the light of the more complete information of the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries. However great the gaps in evidence and understanding of the two fold divisions between the tenth and thirteenth centuries, these are as nothing compared to the difficulties of considering the origins of the divisions. The vagueness with which the dual social divisions may be seen in the period from the tenth to the thirteenth centuries may appear to make suggestions about origins particularly hazardous. However, it

is particularly because knowledge about the divisions is so fragmentary at this time and even later that any analysis must imply a set of notions about their origins.

The development of the two fold division of lower castes appears as the consequence of two significant structural features of the society of the region during its early history. These are the territorial segmentation of society and culture, and the ambiguous social status of the non-Brahmana population given the commitment to Brahmanaical ideology by the Pallava period. Early attempts by people of the region to cope with these structural features produced a status system pivoting upon the power of the peasantry of the numerous localities into which the Southern peninsula was divided. For a substantial portion of the population-those who were not of the dominant peasant groups-the status system of the Pallava and most of the Chola periods was unsatisfactory, and by the eleventh century, merchants and artisans along with their urban and rural dependents began to function independently of and to some extent in opposition to peasant leaders of local society. This modification occurred without altering the basic territorial segmentation of society or the ambiguous status positions of non-Brahmanas in South India, and the two fold social divisions of the eleventh century were to remain important for centuries. Membership in, or at least association or alliance with, established status groupings in an increasingly stratified society was the principal motivation for the division. The process of an expanding

agrarian system partly by military means, partly by peaceful means created the need to assimilate new people; this was an important feature of the Pallava and early Chola periods. In this process, occupational and residential groupings were the prime organizational *loci*. The expanding requirements for the services of essentially urban-based merchants and artisans provided the opportunity for the development.

The emergence of groups identifying themselves as the left division in the eleventh century does not rule out the possibility that there might have been an earlier foundation for such a division. One such hypothesis is that the divisions represent peoples of different racial origin within South India dating from ancient times. Racial admixtures were there, but apart from the 'Aryan migration' which introduced Brahmanaical as well as Jaina and Buddhist institutions, there is no convincing historical evidence of a significant, racially distinct stratification which could account for the divisions as known after the tenth century. Nor does the view here deny a variant of the, ancient racial argument which distinguished between 'indigenous' people of a culture area and 'strangers' who took up residence there. The latter hypothesis is supported by occasional references in Karnataka where *nadu* and *desa* (for strangers) are co-equal with edagay and balagay. *Valangai velaikkarar* are considered by Srinivasa Iyengar to be 'Tamilians', whereas the *Idangai velaikkarar*, according to him, consisted of warriors from Andhra (*vadugan*), Kerala (*malaiyalar*), and others not of the Chola heartland of

Cholamandalam and Tondaimandalam (other groups ‘mentioned included Pallan and Mallar from Pandya country, Bedar from Karnataka, and Madigas from Andhra.). Another manifestation of this ‘stranger’ versus ‘indigenous’ classification is in the epigram of the low caste of Paraiyan, invariably associated with the right-hand division in recent centuries: ‘the *paraiyar* are not of the left hand, they are Tamilians’. While the conception of ‘stranger peoples’ may have entered into the dual division, the core elements of the divisions, on both sides, must be considered as ‘indigenous’.

Another view of how earlier divisions in the society of the region may have served as the basis for the subsequent development of the right and left-hand divisions appears to be emerging from recent scholarship on the classical or Sangam era. Poets of one order may not have been poets of the other, and while certain cultural continuities existed between the orders-in language and beliefs at least-it is as yet difficult to see’ them as constituting a single civilization. However, these two orders might have comprised a single society as proposed by SuBrahmanaian and this could have established the basic framework for the later, historical divisions.

Territorial segmentation has referred principally to the isolation of the many locality cores of peasant population, *nadus*, scattered over the Tamil plain. The degree of isolation conformed with physiographical factors to a significant extent; thus, in the central Kaveri basin, there was less isolation,

greater continuity of settlement, than in the western parts of the basin (parts of modern Tiruchirapalli, South Arcot, and Salem) and in the tracts South of the Kaveri. Judging from the distribution of ancient inscriptional and modern records referring to the right and left divisions; the greater the degree of isolation among the peasant cores of settlement, the more important and conspicuous was the dual division. The central Kaveri basin appears never to have developed the intensive divisional alignments found in the central portion of the Tamil plain where the dual divisions were both an early and persistent phenomenon with Kanchi serving as the centre for both.

By the late Pallava period, and certainly in the Chola period, Brahmana groups were virtually closed, priestly corporations dominated by Smartas of various divisions. Vadama Smarta Brahmanas perhaps, were the most prestigious. Their names suggest a northern origin (*vada* means 'north') but the title, *vadama* could also refer to the proficiency in Sanskrit and Vedic ritual, which then and earlier were associated with the north. Other Smarta Brahmanas were divided into territorial sub divisions. There was also a smaller group of Vaishnava Brahmanas the Vaikanasas; it was not until some centuries later that Vaishnava Brahmanas began to constitute a somewhat larger proportion of the Brahmana population, and at that later time, the numbers were primarily the result of a shift of Smartas to the fold of the dynamic and expanding Sri Vaishnava *sampradayas*. Brahmanas were unchallenged in this sacred or secular authority either by rival religions or by

warriors determined or disposed to diminish their role. Brahmanas thus, constituted a strong and impenetrable stratum of the contemporary social system. No less clearly defined in this social system were those at the bottom. Enjoying neither the high ritual status nor the status provided by holding land or possessing skills essential to the maintenance of peasant agrarian operations, agricultural labourers occupied the unambiguously lowest strata of contemporary society.

When the marginal tracts were brought under irrigation by the expansion of prosperous and powerful peasant groups with requisite organization, capital (mostly in the form of superior skills but also livestock), adequate manpower, and superior military power, the former occupants of these lands were reduced to labour dependents of the expanding peasantry, or they fled to still more marginal tracts only to be incorporated later or forced once again to flee. Another source of this lowest tier of social groups were those of the forests to whom regular sedentary agricultural pursuits were unknown. When forests were felled by expanding peasant agriculture, as they were throughout the Pallava period, the fate of the forest dwellers was the same as that to whom agricultural labour was already a fulltime though hazardous basis of livelihood.

Apart from the degraded status which was attached to those who laboured on the fields of others and were therefore without substantial rights

or means for ameliorating their conditions except the threat of absconding, there were those whose purchase in peasant social organization was even worse, by a slight degree, because they combined some polluting craft with their principal agricultural labour. Such were the leather workers, Sakkiliyar and Madiga, for example, whose low occupational status as field workers was negatively reinforced by their work with leather and the preparation of hides. Others included musicians and dancers who constituted part of the corps of bards in the classical period.

Between the poorest field workers, artisans and artists and the highest strata of priests were the majority of the population. During the recent, modern past, ranking pressures have been the most severe at this level of society consisting of powerful land controlling peasant groups and wealthy merchants, bankers, and artisans. Beneath these has been a second order of peasants who lacked the means to support a claim to being dominant peasants, *pumpputirar*, ‘sons of the soil’. Finally, there have been many kinds of village artisans and service groups (as washermen, barbers, and potters) whose work was tainted by a not always logical set of pollution norms. Among such varied groups, the terminology dictated by Brahmanaical usage, such as ‘Sudra’, serves no analytical purpose, and, in the recent past, that label has been rejected by those upon whom it was placed by other Indians or by British administrators.

The modern term ‘non-Brahmana’, comes closer than any other to encompassing the middle groups of the early period in the sense of being ‘respectable’, socially mobile, and yet clearly neither of the highest nor lowest strata. To the modern era, however, ‘non-Brahmana’, is difficult to disassociate from the twentieth century context when the term was claimed by educated and politically mobilized groups of Tamil Nadu and Andhra bent on displacing Brahmanas from what they regarded as places of disproportionate advantage. Still, the term ‘non-Brahmana’ is more appropriate than the varna terms Vaisya and Sudra in the South Indian context though the latter terms occur in ritual manuals (*agama*) and inscriptions occasionally. In fact, there appears to be no generic term for those beneath the status of Brahmanas in the medieval period or earlier. Sectarian terms such as *cattatavan* and *saiva*, denoting votaries of Vishnu and Siva who were not Brahmanas, are too narrowly circumscribed in their reference. In the corpus of South Indian inscriptions, there occur numerous specific ethno occupational groups below the status of Brahmanas such as: *adavimar*, *ayogavar*, *kaikkolar*, *saligar* (weavers), *alavar*, *parampar*, *vellan* (cultivators), *anjuvannam*, *kammalar* (artisans), *pattinavar*, *bharatavar* (fishermen), *davana-chetti*, *teliki* (merchants), *ilavar* (toddy tappers), *kannakkanan* (brazier), *mannan*, *vannan* (washermen), manradi (shepherd), *navisan* (barber), *taiyan* (tailor);’ and *vetkovan* (potter). The terms *Idangai* and *Valangai* are themselves references to general classes of non-

Brahmanas, except that the two fold divisions included among their most active members those of very low status.

It seems evident that there was little of the rank striving and conflict among local ethnic groupings that one finds in contemporary South India. The nineteenth and twentieth century claims of some middle groups to the status of Brahmanas may have occurred earlier; Vellalas and Reddis, dominant peasants of the modern Tamil and Andhra plains, occasionally equated their control over land with the rights of Kshatriyas. Such claims were as irrelevant in an earlier age as they were during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Ranking postulates are ‘not based upon unilateral claims, but upon interactions among claimants with each other and with those considered the lowest and most polluted, on the other side.

From the earliest references to the two fold division their compositions appear to have included a wide range of groups which in more recent times maintain punctilious differentiation and relative ranking. Yet, regarding the diction of the *Idangai* and *Valangai* ‘inscriptions and the administrative and judicial records of the seventeenth to the twentieth centuries give no importance to relative rank within the divisions. On the contrary, the divisions represent themselves or are represented as pluralistic collectivities enjoying an apparent equality as in various kinds of sodalities. The critical factor in the divisions of this early period and later was not relative ranking among the

constituents, but shared substance and interests. It was not rank but membership within a division which was important. Only the very powerful or very marginal could claim or afford a position of neutrality (e.g. the status of *madhyasta* in the Baramahal Records) with respect to the dual-alliance formations.

The powerful *nattar* were in the best position to separate themselves from others of the ambiguous middle strata. Their economic control and military authority within the framework of the Chola overlordship, their claims to ancient respectability and political primacy, and their close relations with Brahmanas all combined to effect this separation. To those less favourably placed, but still important in agrarian relationships peasant groups of lesser status and certain merchants and artisans-the right division provided alliance support of importance. Craftsmen and merchants less directly involved in agrarian relations sought alliance refuge in the left division, for in the balancing of status and locality solidarity which hinged upon links to the land, they had but poor claims. Moreover, to the extent that such craft and mercantile activities could be identified with the urban social order, they bore an additional status handicap of having been associated with heterodoxy. A core of military forces stood ready to support the latter coalition in the form of armed contingents of itinerant traders.

The supra local system of dual divisions became evident first in the *Valangai* military units of the first of the great Cholas, Rajaraja-I. At that time there appears to have been no contending *Idangai*. The designation *Valangai* at this earlier time may have been the way of referring to the armed peasantry of Cholamandalam and Tondaimandalam who had overcome a considerable measure of isolation and had begun to cooperate militarily, first under various chiefs and later under the great Cholas. They had become the weapon, the 'right-hand', of ambitious warrior leaders. These were potential or relative structures, not absolute and continuous ones, as suggested in the term *velai*, in *velaikkara*r, meaning 'occasional'. It was not until two centuries after the first references to essentially localized peasant groups collaborating on wider regional lines for military purposes that the left division appears to have achieved the same degree of supra-local potential organization. Venkayya's view that the existence of the *Valangai* soldiers in the time of Rajaraja-I implied the existence of the *Idangai* would, under this interpretation, be questionable. It is more probable that the prior existence of the peasant-dominated right division led to the development of an opposing division at a later time that is during the eleventh century.

Removed from the great brahmadeya centres of orthodoxy of the tenth and eleventh centuries, which afford the most important sources of information of this period, the rise of the left-hand division and the establishment of a true dual division was slow to be registered. Mobile

artisan/trader groups, even after they had shifted their allegiance from the heterodox to the Saivite orthodox faith of the era, probably continued to be held in suspicion. However, such groups could claim an ancient and honourable past during which they enjoyed respectable status if evidence such as the Classical epics, Cilappadikaram and Manirnekalai are to be credited even partially and if the rathakara connection was accepted widely. Neither these artisan/trader groups nor the itinerant traders with whom they were linked would long have willingly accepted the low status which had befallen them in many agrarian settlements. They would, accordingly, seize upon the new opportunities of the twelfth century and after to alter that status. Among the most important of the opportunities were those associated with temple development in that age.

Research Findings and Solution to the Problem

The castes system in ancient South India in particular and the caste system generally in India overall helps us to understand and digest the thorough knowledge about the caste system prevailing during the times of pre-historic times, Vedic age, Aryan Invasion and Brahminical expansion in the society. The caste system existing in India in the different nook and corner of India varies from places to place according to the existing condition and the different situations, therefore many historians have done commendable work about the caste system, its origin and gensis and its

growth. The author G.S. Ghurye states about the caste system since the beginning of the Vedic age. Again he says that when the Aryan Invasion took place how the changes occurred in the society and community. He later differentiate between the Caste and the Varnas. How Varnas later on took the shape of the dominating figures in the community over the Shudra. Indirectly how the down trodden and the how class people were exploited to a greater extent in various aspects. The liberty of the person was seized by putting the lable of caste on them. Even the women's were not excused from this type of attitude. Even the women's were highly targeted equally with the men's. Because women she did not have right to cover the whole body, instead she has to keep the upper part of the body bare to denote that she is low caste women. 'Burton Stein' also helps us to know the caste system prevailing in the Medieval South India. He highlights the state and conditions existing totally in the Deccan region. "Edgar Thurston" in his castes and tribes of Southern India, helps us to know the various tribes and their castes of and their occupation carried according to their caste level. The caste system in ancient South India is an interesting topic. So the scholar has chosen this topic to understand the caste system in India in general and Ancient South India in particular and he had a great concern towards the society and community.

1. How was the caste system in Ancient, Vedic period and during the times of the Aryans?

2. How was the society divided and on what base?
3. Why the Brahmin's dominated over the Shudras and low class people?
4. What was the profession of the Shudras carried on?
5. How was the Hierarchy system divided?
6. Was Shudra women exploited in the name of caste system?
7. What type of caste system prevailed in ancient South India?
8. What was the role of "Varna" system and how Varna System changed its concepts later on eventually?
9. Whether the sub caste and caste were equally treated by the upper categories.?
10. Did caste emerge in India after Invasion of the Aryan expansion?
11. How the caste system had the adverse affect on the Shudras?
12. How was the caste system in Tamil region?
13. Why the rituals and sacrifices enforced on the low class and shudras by the Brahmins?
14. Was the caste system in ancient South India was different from than that of north India?

15. The evil practices of untouchability and inapproachability in the social order of South India was the gift of Aryans, in fact the culture led for the rise of social harmony and mutual understanding.

16. What was the difference between Valangai and Idangai?

These are the some findings mentioned above are considered in the research topic and also here I came across suitable solutions, as caste system is one of the major problem in India, though many initiative have been taken by the state and central government. But still somewhere in the grass root level it has its own remarkable foot prints, where it makes the scholars to think why it is so deeply rooted into the soil of India and what might be the proper solution. It is not only the work of government to fight back against the caste system, but it is the duty of each and every educated individuals to take a stand in routing out this problem.

The solutions that I have come forward are as follows:

- ➢ As this era is the age of computer and technology scientific and rational thinking is very important. Firstly each and every individuals has to change his attitude and outlook towards the society and social being.
- ➢ Secondly one should have human concern towards all community people.

- Thirdly, the initiative should be taken immediately against the exploitation by the dominant over the weak.
- Fourthly give co-operation and join with the institutions and the government in eradicating or solving the existing problem.
- Next the youngsters have to take lead as they are the future generation and the fate of India is decided by the youths of this nation. The press media and television has also greater responsibilities towards the people, if they come across such problem and if the innocent is troubled and socially exploited then it is their duty to bring to the notice of the concern officer and the government and enrich speedy justice to the hurted onces.

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